

MENTAL EFFICIENCY
WITHOUT FATIGUE

BY NARCISO IRALA, S.J.

Author of ACHIEVING PEACE OF HEART

*“Could change the
whole course
of your life!”*

We live today in a highly competitive society. That's why the shelves of book dealers and libraries are crowded with pat formulas for attaining success. Not all who read these “how to” volumes, however, will be blessed with the mental stamina to master the lessons they purport to teach. Nor is the reason hard to find. Mental fatigue sets in. That's why so many ambitious men and women miss their goals . . . some because they failed to keep their eyes open for constructive suggestions, some because they needed inspiration, encouragement and stimulation; and still others because of the simple truth that nothing is more agreeable to most people than escaping the need for mental exertion.

Narciso Irala, S.J., world renowned psychiatrist and lecturer, was one of the first to recognize that negative habits such as envy, fears, hatreds and frustrations are the root causes of mental fatigue; and first to demonstrate how business executives, students and

(Continued on back flap)

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Foreword

FATHER NARCISO IRALA's latest book will reach a widening circle of appreciative and enthusiastic readers. The immediate and enduring success of his *Achieving Peace of Heart* has established Father Irala as one of the most sought-after lecturers and counselors in the English-speaking world. I have no hesitation whatsoever in predicting that the present volume will not only further endear him to his host of appreciative readers, but will increase the tribe of those who have found comfort in his clear and sympathetic directions to peace of heart.

In *Mental Efficiency without Fatigue* the author writes wholly without pretense; his single aim is to be of help. Here he treats of attention, concentration and retention in a very broad and inclusive manner. This subject as dealt with in this book is most important for personal development and happiness and for the realization of one's personal resources, which may be richer than one has believed. It is also a subject very important for the avoidance and relief of tension, strain and fatigue and the disorders related thereto. Various factors which produce these inconveniences and means of avoiding or relieving them are clearly and practically set forth.

This untiring apostle of human happiness and well-being manifests again his vital interest in the whole man in his mental, emotional and organic being, in his strivings for fulfillment in human society and its varied goals, and in God. Hence his book will be appreciated by laymen, clergy and religious of all faiths.

Once more Father Irala shows his power of presentation by offering a book at once interesting, clear, persuasive and very helpful. Here recent scientific findings are woven into a synthesis rich and integral, easily understood and easily absorbed.

Anyone who seeks achievement in study or in work, or in a life of virtue and of prayer, will find much help in this excellent work. Especially commendable are the author's wide horizons, encouraging achievement in goals purely natural and in goals divine, with special attention to the application of his principles to prayer.

Those lacking interest in achievement of any kind may find it awakened, and the way to their personal happiness made easier; they may find themselves achieving what previously they had not dared hope for.

This author's gentle warmth enkindles, his clarity enlightens, and his goodness inspires.

M. RAPHAEL SIMON, O. C. S. O.

*St. Joseph's Abbey
Spencer, Massachusetts
August 15, 1963.*

Preface

OURS IS AN ERA OF WONDERFUL achievements in science and in industry: space probings are no longer spectacular; television has become intercontinental; transoceanic travel has been reduced to hours. By the time this manuscript is in print, still greater marvels will have captivated our awe, but only for the moment, so casually do we accept the near miraculous from our world scientists.

At the same time, ours is also an era of overwork, of excessive fatigue, of deep frustrations. So very many of us become nervous after a very short period of work, particularly that requiring intellectual effort. Countless suffer from headaches, backaches, pain and tension of the neck, and this frequently after only an hour of sedentary work. How many there are who become harrassed victims of recurring distractions which curtail their efficiency! Obsessing thoughts or worries torture and exhaust others; their memory fails. To a large number, resting after work or even sleeping becomes difficult. Finally, not a few are frustrated or bored and they are all but convinced that it is impossible to enjoy their jobs and to attain success.

In order to achieve maximum mental efficiency without fatigue, all these people—students, businessmen, those in the professions—want to understand their mental make-up, what may be amiss with their attitudes or the functionings of their body or mind, and what is causing inefficiency, boredom, tiredness, failure. They look for additional and fruitful ways of increasing their attention, reasoning, memory, interest, enthusiasm, and the power of will in order to be more successful in their enterprises. And those whose ideal is sanctity and close communion with God want spiritual profit from a better understanding of their mental and functioning equipment and of every means of making their natural endowments perform better for supernatural ends.

In answer to these needs and aspirations I have given lectures, before religious communities and student groups, in theaters, banks and factories, both in South America and in the United States. It is Dr. Fiterre of the National University of Havana who prevailed on me to prepare the substance of my lectures for publication. The pamphlet, *Eficiencia sin Fatiga*, which appeared in Spanish in 1957 and is now approaching the 100,000 mark in sales, is the result of Dr. Fiterre's generous encouragement. The present manual is a result of the encouragement I have received both from my lectures throughout the English-speaking world (on the subject of mental efficiency without fatigue) and, in a special way, of the most heartening welcome accorded my *Achieving Peace of Heart*.

While I insist that my present work is not an effort to advance the formal tenets of psychology or pedagogy, I do also insist that its practical suggestions have been tried and found helpful in the many years and in the many climes I have used them in counseling. The heartening results lead me to urge the reader of these pages not to be satisfied with his present horizons, but to look beyond, and never to become discouraged in his pursuit of worthwhile goals. If your methods are good, they can be improved, and likely with less effort and fatigue; if your methods have borne little fruit and great fatigue, there are simple and easily applied remedies to give you mental efficiency without fatigue.

THE AUTHOR.

New York, N. Y.
July 31, 1963.



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INTRODUCTION

Intellectual Happiness

ALL KNOWLEDGE ENRICHES us since we take possession of that which we apprehend.¹ We like to travel, for example, because, in so doing, we become acquainted with the world and its inhabitants; they become part of us and enrich our lives. News interests us, and all the more so when it is of universal importance and when it affects us intimately. We enjoy movies and novels; we feel an even deeper satisfaction in understanding important scientific laws or the ultimate causes of being in philosophy. But never is full intellectual satisfaction better experienced than when the scientist discovers something that will increase the happiness of humanity or when someone, especially dedicated to God, reveals to us some faint and guiding ray of divine light. We all want to know; insatiable curiosity urges us on.

A great scientist was once asked if he believed in heaven. He answered, in effect: «I believe in intellec-

¹ In Latin, *apprehendere* means «to seize,» «to lay hold of.»

tual happiness. I have often experienced the deep pleasure of discovering truths hitherto unknown to me and to my fellow men. I want to continue to increase my enjoyment each day in the same way, but I am prevented from doing so by the limitations of my intellect, by lack of time, and by bodily resistance. I believe there must be a state in which we can satisfy this desire of knowing truth more deeply, with greater certainty and without weariness.»

I should like to draw my readers in the course of succeeding pages, as closely as possible in this present life toward the attainment of what religion promises its adherents. I shall try to explain simply and clearly some of the *psychic* (pertaining to the soul) and some of the *somatic* (pertaining to the body) factors which will help all of us gain a greater efficiency with a minimum of mental application.

The *psychic factors*, simply stated, are: receptive and reasoning attention, and memory derived from intellectual life; interest and enthusiasm which come from the feelings and emotions which, in turn, constitute our affective life; desires and decisions of the will which spring from our volitive life. The *somatic factors*—the immediate cause of fatigue—depend on our organic life, especially on our muscles, our breathing and our blood.

Our knowledge which, as a deep and crystalline stream, quenches our thirst for learning, has its source in four types of vital activity or four facets of life: the intellectual, the volitive, the affective and the organic. When these four work together harmoniously,

the resultant efficiency is maximum, and fatigue is at a minimum. But if one of these fails to work in harmony with the others, the general effectiveness is weakened.

The mentally retarded individual lacks normal *intellectual life*; on the other hand, someone who is normally equipped, but who is always distracted, is deprived of the full use of intellectual life. A person faced with family or social crises, for example, someone with serious problems affecting his conscience, or someone in financial straits—these people are distracted with good reason and will find it very difficult to concentrate when they wish to study or devote themselves to any other mental or manual work. Shaken by the emotion of fear, the *affective life* of these people is seriously disturbed. Weak-willed or inconstant people, on another level, are seriously hindered by the weaknesses of their *volitive life*. Charles Darwin, the naturalist, could work mentally for no more than two hours a day, but his difficulties were on the level of *organic life*.

It will, therefore, be most useful to know how we can best organize each one of these levels of our activities. In so doing we shall not be wearied or impeded by the lack or imbalance of order, and we shall draw from that ordering the greatest possible advantage to ourselves.

EFFICIENCY WITHOUT FATIGUE

Through intellectual life by	{ Attention: Collects ideas. Reflection: Organizes, relates, unites ideas. Retention (Memory): Preserves and reproduces ideas.
Through affective life by	{ Feelings: Give interest. Emotions: Give enthusiasm.
Through volitive life by	{ Motivation: Gives strength. Decision: Gives constancy.
Through organic life by	{ Muscles: Give support. Blood: Gives nourishment. Respiration: Gives support and nourishment.



INTELLECTUAL LIFE

*Receptive
Attention*
gathers
materials
(ideas).

Concentrated

- { Follows one idea
- { The lamp focusing on one object

Distracted

- { Interrupted idea
- { The lamp shifting to another spot

Compulsive
(Obsessed)

- { Parasitic ideas
- { An object interposing itself

Purposive:
relates

{ The new ideas to the goal, ideal

**Elaborating
Attention**
unifies,
relates
ideas.

Intellectual:
associates

- { Cause and effect
- { Part and whole
- { Essential and accidental

Representative,
affective:
relates

{ colors, sounds,
feelings

Memory
keeps and
recalls
ideas.

Increases
through
better

- Concentration: several senses
- Reflection: association
- Repetition: When? How?

I

Intellectual Life

CHAPTER 1

Attention

WITHOUT ATTENTION WE WOULD BE, as it were, immersed as in a dark night, surrounded by countless treasures, but unable to notice, grasp, or enjoy them. When we pay attention, however, our entire being, in its capacity of knowing, is alerted and turns to one of the treasures or to a small group of them. We have put on the light of the mind; we have apprehended it. Now we enjoy its reality, its beauty, its variety, etc. As we go up the scale of nobility, we reach objects more intelligible in themselves, but less intelligible to us: God is the supreme example.

Attention to external things means a physical setting of senses (open eyes, some muscular strain, etc.) and a mental disposition of the soul—an expectancy. It means selection. Many external impressions (color, sounds, movements) and internal needs (in-

instincts, body sensations, etc.) solicit our minds at every moment. Through attention we accept one or a small group of them into our consciousness and ignore the others. Attention may be involuntary, voluntary, or habitual.

Involuntary, spontaneous attention exists without any conscious effort on our part, as when a sudden flash of noise from outside attracts and draws us. This is a universal experience and may be noticed in children at play, for example.

Voluntary attention is imposed by the will when social pressure or other personal motives are at work. This requires some effort. In order to overcome the attraction of other stimuli, voluntary attention requires effort. From this conflict and effort, prolonged voluntary attention may end in fatigue or boredom. However, voluntary attention may be educated, and through sufficient repetition, may form the habit of attention.

Habitual attention indicates the conflict finished and effort minimized. This is the efficient attention with which we are going to deal, the attention we should endeavor to obtain in all mental work.

Receptive attention is knowledge, or awareness, of objects, sounds, ideas, etc., without advertence to other knowledge, without adding anything of our own. In this calm attention our breathing and blood circulation is slightly accelerated and muscular tension is increased. Through such attention we assemble the materials of knowledge.

Reflexive, or elaborating, attention is a repeated, more active attention which both recognizes the object, distinguishes it from others, or relates it to them and draws consequences. In this manner we build the Palace of Knowledge. In this form of attention our tension, breathing and circulation will increase still more.

Finally, from the convenient repetition of these last two kinds of attention emerges our *memory* which keeps and reproduces in the mind things already known. Memory preserves the Palace of Knowledge.

Let us now consider these three abilities of our mind and some laws, or norms, that will give them greater efficiency. We shall better organize our procedure by following the chart on the next page.

RECEPTIVE ATTENTION

Receptive attention can be:

Concentrated: it pursues one idea; the light is focused on a single spot.

Distracted: it is interrupted by distractions; the light is turned to another object.

Obsessed: with parasitic ideas; some emotionally charged object of dread interposes itself between the lamp and the treasure.

Concentrated Attention	Re- education	{ Efficiency and joy—maximum Fatigue and disgust—minimum Concentration—root of greatness
	4 Steps	{ Adjustment (mental and organic) Delving deeply Saturation Fatigue
	Re- education	{ Fights distraction, obsession Arouses interest, enthusiasm Begins courageously

I

CHAPTER 2

Concentrated Attention

OUR ATTENTION IS CONCENTRATED when we pursue a single idea to the exclusion of others, or when the lamp of our intellect is focused on one object or on a small group of objects. Concentration, therefore, is the reaction of our whole being to an attracting event or treasure; it is the habit of paying attention without effort; it is the following of a straight road that leads to our destination without our being led astray by attractions on the bypaths. We arrive more promptly and almost without weariness.

In like manner, he who studies a book, performs manual work or plans a business deal and becomes totally absorbed in it, forgetting himself and everything else, will obtain surprising results without lasting fatigue.

Concentration brings efficiency and joy which results in maximum efficiency.

Lack of concentration brings fatigue and disgust which results in minimum efficiency.

The wear of one or more hours of perfect concentration without hurry or anxiety can be repaired by relaxing the brow and the eyes for a few minutes, by receiving conscious sensations, by performing physical exercise, etc. One day of well-ordered mental work of this type can be amply compensated by a night of peaceful slumber. In this manner it is possible to continue for months and years with no danger of exhaustion. Since we are following nature's own wise laws, we shall strengthen rather than destroy our mental equipment.

Nor should we think that this continued labor will result in boredom; the opposite is, in fact, true. For the unity of the concentrated mind and the resultant intellectual enrichment are sources of real satisfaction. «Joy,» says Aristotle, «accompanies every perfect act.»

The root of Napoleon's human greatness was probably his power of concentration. When he studied a problem, he became so absorbed in it that it seemed he had nothing else to do. Having solved one problem, having made one decision, Napoleon went on to study another. He used to say: «When I want to sleep, I close every drawer and I sleep. When I want to interrupt an affair, I close its drawer and open another one.» In this way, Napoleon managed to do mental work for sixteen hours a day. He was extraordinarily

efficient because the unity of his mind gave strength and constancy to his decisions.

This power of concentrating our attention on what we study or undertake is the main, though not the only, element influencing mental ability and human greatness.

Concentration: Root of Human Greatness

The better our concentration, the greater our achievement. This truth holds a most encouraging prospect for us.

I once knew a student who possessed a remarkable gift of concentration. He was «mad» for mathematics, so much so that he would begin his studies right after breakfast. Hour after hour he remained oblivious of himself and of all sound or movement around him. So absorbed was he in that deep and delightful concentration that he heard nothing, not even the bells. When he completed studies at the University of Madrid, he emerged as the most gifted student ever to have passed through those halls. That extraordinary distinction was largely the result of his remarkable powers of concentration.

Improving the Powers of Concentration

Once concentration is appreciated as the main factor in efficiency and happiness, whatever means are suggested in the course of these pages should help to increase this power.

- a) by removing causes of distraction and obsession;
- b) arousing our interest and enthusiasm as we shall explain in the section on the affective life;
- c) making use of efficacious acts of the will;
- d) improving the functioning of the human organism—its nerves, muscles, blood, respiration.

Stages in the Pattern of Concentration

Concentration does not develop suddenly. It is usually preceded by an *initial period* of «adjustment» in which nerves and muscles, perhaps previously overstimulated, gradually adapt themselves to the new task, while the mind, setting aside other thoughts, penetrates ever more deeply into the present object of its attention. This is quickly executed by normal persons. Melancholic and maniacal individuals require a longer time to delve into a new concentration. This may be because former ideas or images tend to persevere longer in them than in normal persons.

There follows a *second period* of «warm-up» as a temporary state of readiness induced by activity and followed by the depth of the attention in which, after the first inertia has been overcome and the nerves and muscles have been adapted to the task, the mind really enters into the matter and becomes absorbed in it. This abstraction from all other things and this profound consideration of the present subject may reach different degrees, and in proportion to these will be our efficiency and our joy.

Many people become deeply interested and are able to concentrate smoothly for one, two, or more hours with a single act of their will. In many others, however, attention is spasmodic or explosive, sustained by repeated impulses—perhaps because their interest does not thoroughly overcome inertia or because the will of a perfectionist is imposing an exaggerated goal. On the other hand, children as well as inconstant, weak and sick persons do not possess such prolonged attention. They need frequently to renew their interest or acts of will. Later on we shall explain how even normal persons should interrupt their concentration every one or two hours or more frequently if they develop any tension. Thus fatigue is avoided or at least postponed.

In the *third period* (saturation) attention weakens, concentration requires a greater effort, and weariness or boredom begins to emerge. It is at this moment that an interruption or a change of the object of concentration is necessary. Unless this is done, the fourth period (fatigue) will quickly set in. During this period efficiency gradually lessens and weariness increases, together with a lack of interest, inhibition, and the annoyance caused by effort.

Practice For Improved Concentration

1) Always have a motive, a concrete, feasible goal for your work. For instance: «I want to enrich myself with, or to discuss the ideas of, this chapter.» Such a desire is excellent to enforce concentration

if it can be realized in one or a few hours. It will lose its efficiency, however, if you have to read for hours or days, unless that desire is reenforced through repetition. So, make it easier by tackling one chapter or paragraph at a time. Say, «I want to discover and learn every useful thought of this chapter.» With this concrete and realizable goal, your willing will be efficient, and attention will follow. That is what we do when, while reading a book or article, we underline any interesting information or when we make résumés of helpful paragraphs.

2) Begin courageously, even though you experience neither pleasure nor progress. Concentration will follow as spontaneously as does sleep, and without your being conscious of it or having to make an effort. Just start under favorable circumstances. Music or moderate sounds, chewing or whistling help some persons, but not all.

3) Resist the curiosity of knowing what is taking place around you.

4) Arouse interest and enthusiasm for what you are doing.

5) If either weakness or fatigue makes it difficult for you to concentrate on a full page of reading or on a short lecture, try without strain to be truly attentive for shorter periods several times a day. During these attempts, the single objective should be, positively to follow calmly the development of the idea rather than, negatively, to avoid distraction. If distractions do occur, make an effort to return once more to the subject matter. Normal concentration may

quickly be achieved by paying strict attention to half a page of reading or by paying attention several times during, say, a ten-minute period, then gradually increasing the length of the period of attention.

6) Do not drink alcoholic beverages to stimulate your attention or your organism. In spite of the widespread opposite opinion, alcohol is a depressant, not a stimulant. In the beginning, it is true, you may feel self-confidence and optimism about your own performance. This happens because alcohol reaches the highest centers first, and so you *think* your mental work is better than it is. But the delaying effects are mental depression and emotional irritability.

7) Coffee and tea are stimulating and safe for those who need a «lift.» Their effect does not come immediately and it may last for a few hours. However, sleep may be disturbed as a result of large doses, the pulse accelerated, muscular steadiness decreased, and tremor may set in.

Concentration in Prayer

In study or natural mental work, the measure of our intellectual happiness is established by two factors: our interest in the object or truth discovered; the clarity with which we see it. In prayer or in other supernatural mental work, these two factors attain unlimited proportions. The object studied is God who is total Truth and Beauty, and the light of Infinite Wisdom is added to the smaller lamp of human understanding.

If we cannot attain true efficiency and satisfaction in study, reading, or thinking without full concentration, much less shall we be able to step forward and enjoy the unsuspected delights of conversing with God unless we give Him our full attention.

The life of God within us often implies sudden shafts of supernatural light, waves of superhuman satisfaction, anticipation of heaven, touches of divinity. These are the inspirations which suddenly illuminate undreamed-of horizons and treasures with almost intuitive evidence. These are the affections and consolations often experienced by saints and by people of good will when they make a retreat or truly recollect themselves in prayer—consolations surpassing all earthly joys, impossible to be understood by those who have not experienced them. These are also motives clearly perceived in prayer which attract the will and facilitate what is difficult. In an effort to make this clear and simple we may use this formula:

Attentive prayer = Root of Sanctity

Or, using RC to represent «Result of concentration into the divine,» we may say,

$$\text{RC} \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Efficiency} + \text{joy} = \text{Limitless} \\ \text{Fatigue} + \text{distaste} = \text{Nil} \end{array} \right.$$

The soul that is not sufficiently recollected remains unaware of these divine sparks and consolations; rather, God refrains from giving them when He foresees that, because of the soul's dissipation, they will be neither noticed nor appreciated.

If only we could enter with our whole being into conversation with God! If only we were fully attentive to what we say to Him in a brief vocal prayer! If we would only listen to what God wishes to say to us in the intimacy of our prayer! God speaks, as a rule, only in the most intimate part of our being; we shall hear Him only through perfect concentration.

In prayer, as in study, concentration does not usually come suddenly. The *first period* of mental and muscular «adjustment» is even more necessary here, for in our prayer we are to lift ourselves above what is visible, temporary and human; we are to penetrate into heaven, speak with the Infinite Being and discover superhuman treasures. For this purpose St. Ignatius of Loyola recommends that, once we are in the place where we are to pray, we should raise our thoughts on high for the space of an «Our Father.» Realizing that God is present, is looking at us, we should reverently worship Him.

In our short prayers during the day, this is easily attained by making the Sign of the Cross sincerely and with respect, because this places us immediately in the presence of, and in union with, the Most Holy Trinity. Many people never really become absorbed or truly enter into prayer because they fail to make this «adjustment.»

The *second period* of leaving the earth entirely in order to penetrate into heaven, and of entering with ever-increasing recollection into audience with God has several degrees, culminating in the complete removal (abstraction) of what is sensible. The indiv-

idual then feels God's presence in the most profound depths of his soul, for God speaks, as we said, only in our innermost being. Since, however, He is so desirous of communicating with His creatures, we shall soon feel His presence if we diligently make use of human means and if we attract His divine aid by our humility and confidence.

I saw examples of this among children in China who were newly converted to Christianity. With closed eyes and clasped hands, they made every effort to think about what they were saying in their prayer. The result was that many of them experienced such consolations that they desired nothing but to keep that happiness all of their lives. For this reason many of them wished to become priests, still others wanted to enter the convent.

If, without vivid faith, it is difficult to converse with the spiritual and invisible God or to think about or meditate on Him, such difficulty is easily overcome, for by the action of God Himself He deigned to become man and to dwell among us. Now we are able to imagine Him as a child or an adult, praying, working, resting, suffering, and in this way we may easily enter into intimacy with Him.

Here, much more than in study, there are degrees of abstraction from the sensible and of concentration on God. In proportion to the depth of our attention will be our intimacy with Him, our sharing of His gifts and our supernatural joy. In other words, the greater our striving for concentration in prayer, the

greater our sanctity, because God, who is never outdone in generosity, rewards our efforts in prayer.

When God grants His divine light, this concentration can be greatly prolonged. Such was the case when St. Francis of Assisi used to begin his prayer at nightfall, only to complain at dawn that the sun was rising too soon, taking him away from the delights of his contemplation.

For ordinary prayer or meditation, St. Ignatius prescribes an hour, advising that it be prolonged a bit when desolation and aridity urge us to shorten it. Such a generous effort is often rewarded by God. St. Aloysius Gonzaga once had to prolong his prayer for five hours because he was determined that he would repeat his meditation until he had made it without distraction. Eventually, through this effort and fidelity to God's will, he attained such steadfastness of mind fixed upon God that it was an effort for him to find distraction in creatures.

When we reach the period of saturation, however, we should interrupt our prayer in order to avoid weariness. Weariness develops not as a result of the prayer itself, but from a compulsive attention, from a prolonged forced posture, or from tenseness.

PRACTICAL RECAPITULATION

Aids to Concentration

Appreciate concentration as root of human greatness.

Remove obstacles, such as noises, conversation, etc.

Arouse interest and enthusiasm.

Desire concentration, convinced that it is possible.

Undertake concentration in a secluded place.

Begin each chapter or paragraph with solid motivation.

Make use of the period of «enthusiasm,» or «depth.»

Interrupt in the period of «pre-fatigue.»

Overcome distractions and compulsions, as we shall explain in the following chapters.

I

CHAPTER 3

Distracted Attention

Distraction means { to advance and turn back
to lose track
to deviate toward the irrelevant
to «be asleep» to the present task
to daydream

WE SUFFER DISTRACTIONS in pursuing a trend of thought when we allow irrelevant stimuli to cause the soul's center of activity (our attention) to deviate from the desired goal. Distraction is like a flashlight which, while focusing on a treasure, shifts to another spot before we have been able to apprehend and enjoy the treasure. Distraction results in an ineffective effort to reach a certain point and a turning aside from the straight road because of advertence to attracting sounds, lights, colors, or movement found

along the way. While reading a book or listening to a conversation or lecture, for example, we pursue insignificant details, objects or ideas. Stimuli not in harmony with our goal occupy the center of our consciousness, and thus we lose track. But we must return to the road and reach our destination. However, this is done with greater delay and weariness. The «result of distraction» may be graphically stated in this formula:

$$RD = \begin{cases} \text{Efficiency decreasing} \\ \text{Fatigue increasing} \end{cases}$$

Consequently, neither mental health is improved nor deep satisfaction experienced. Scattered sunbeams will never set fire to dry wood, but, if they are concentrated and brought into focus by means of a lens, they can start a great blaze. Similarly, a student who does not know how to pay attention will appear to be an intellectual nonentity; once he has learned to concentrate, however, he may become a genius and arouse in others admiration for his efficiency.

Quite often students, as well as professional and business men, are concerned about their poor mental performance. They complain of frequent distractions when they apply for guidance. First and foremost, it is necessary to find out if the distractions are centered about a single theme. If such is the case, the cause—and subsequently the remedy—will be found in the affective life, in exaggerated fears or desires which draw the attention away. This condition will cause even manual workers to experience fatigue.

If an affective or emotional focal point of attraction or repulsion is non-existent and distractions nevertheless flutter about like butterflies from flower to flower, it would be wise to find out whether this lack of attention is general or if it occurs only under certain circumstances. In this way we shall be able to isolate the cause. It may be that an individual has an aversion for or a fear of a given subject matter. This would explain the wandering attention. Or, if this is not the case, the reason he is able to concentrate on certain subjects and not on others may well be objective, that is, the defect may reside outside himself and in the speaker or writer who seeks his attention.

Objective Causes of Distraction

1. The way and the goal are both unknown.
2. The way is blocked.
3. The way is boring or painful.
4. The way offers no rest.

Though the writer or lecturer may try to lead us to the Palace of Knowledge, he leaves much to be desired by his manner of presentation

1. The way and the goal are both unknown. Our mind will easily wander if, from the outset, a concrete goal is not set before us. The theme to be dealt with and the means by which it is to be developed should be made clear at the outset. When, for example, we are on an excursion, we would enjoy ourselves so much more if the interesting aspects of the journey were

outlined in advance. Should we lose our way, we might even arrive by ourselves. The same holds true for a lecture. And factory workers show new interest and alertness when the isolated and hitherto monotonous work in which they have been engaged is shown in relation to the production as a whole.

In trying to read or study a book or an article, let us first ask ourselves: «What is the subject matter? How does this author develop his theme?» The answer will be found in the book's title and subtitle, and particularly in the table of contents. Any book or dissertation will be followed with greater ease and interest in proportion to its organization around an orderly outline, and this framework should be clear from a reading of the table of contents.

2. The way is blocked. If the theme is beyond our present understanding or if new ideas are introduced, without explanation, in the course of the exposition, the mind certainly will abandon further effort. The lecturer or writer who progresses from the known to the unknown without explaining the new ideas and the reasoning he introduces is like someone who tries to raise us to the upper stories while removing the ladder from under us.

In our private study we should leave no gaps, skip no important passages until we have understood them.

3. The way is boring. If the exposition is monotonous because, for example, comparisons or illustrative examples have not been judiciously introduced to clarify and enliven the matter, we shall naturally be

distracted. Moreover, if we experience feelings against the person who is explaining the matter, it is highly probable that we shall transfer our prejudice to the matter being explained. As soon as aversion or displeasure makes its appearance, any task becomes difficult and painful.

4. The way offers no rest. Diagrams, charts and subheads are all important in alleviating prolonged tension in concentration. According to Dr. Henry Arthus,¹ adults can force attention by sheer will power for a period of about twenty minutes without allowing themselves any rest. Beyond this limit it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain attention without stress and loss of energy. For example, driving a car with tense concentration will soon be exhausting unless some relaxation is given the eyes and muscles every once in a while for a few seconds. Unless some relief is given the reader or listener by way of a joke or a story, he will find rest for himself in distraction. When we read difficult material, the author of which has provided no relief, we should take a break ourselves. Here, perhaps, we can gaze out into the distance, or breathe deeply, or calm the mind for a few seconds by relaxing the brows and the eyeballs.

Therefore, we may easily understand the practical wisdom of trying to provide some relief from strict attention during lectures and class work by means of digressions, comparisons, anecdotes, etc., every fif-

¹ Dr. Henry Arthus is author of *Vivre, Psychologie et médecine, L'Attention*, and *La Mémoire*.

teen or twenty minutes if the subject matter allows for this. When speaking to children, in fact, these means should be used even more frequently. So, too, when we are dealing with abstract subjects, except when sufficient interest has already been generated or when the momentum of the theme will not permit such interjections.

So much for the objective causes of distraction. Now, what are the causes of distraction *within* us, the subjective causes?

Subjective Causes of Distraction

- a) Organic weakness.
- b) Agitated life.
- c) Lack of training.
- d) Pathological exhaustion.
- e) Lack of interest.

a) Organic weakness. If one engaged in mental work suffers an organic weakness through illness, convalescence, lack of Vitamin B, or simply through lack of food (as in the case of a person who works all morning without breakfast), it is obvious that it will be difficult for him to pay sustained attention to his work. The very simple solution here is that his health should be built up and proper nourishment should be taken, not in excessive amounts, but in a well-balanced diet that will counteract the lack of vitamins.

b) Agitated life. Life becomes agitated when points

of great attraction, foreign to our present mental work, claim our attention and make concentration difficult. When we try to concentrate, these other interests again occupy the center of our attention. Those who engage too intensely in sports, amusements, social or political activities—even those who are excessively avid readers of fiction—will find attention to mental work frequently interrupted and disturbed.

Dr. Alexis Carrel, winner of the Nobel prize, suggests in his book, *Man the Unknown* that islands of solitude be formed to which intellectuals may withdraw from the rest of the world in order to concentrate on their studies. He goes on to say:

Modern life finds itself opposed to the life of the spirit. Scientists exhaust their strength in vain and waste a large portion of their activities in the search for a quiet retreat for study. No attempt has so far been made to create, in the midst of the restlessness of the world, islands of solitude where meditation might be possible. Such a new departure daily becomes more and more necessary.

Large industrial firms, such as General Motors and General Electric, are bringing this about for their research workers. For these employees they have built large and magnificent edifices, dedicated to research, away from the city and surrounded by beautiful parks. We quote once more from *Man the Unknown*.

It is very difficult for the children of the modern world to enjoy the advantages of the interior life. Many educators consider as a sin this truly hidden, unguessed, incommunicable and secret life. Nevertheless, interior life continues to be the source of all originality and of all great undertakings. It alone permits the individual to preserve his personality in the midst of the crowd. It assures his liberty of spirit and the equilibrium of a balanced nervous system in the midst of the disorder of the modern world.

c) Lack of training. None of the foregoing causes of mental wandering was applicable to a former student of mine. He never wasted a minute of his study period, yet he had the lowest grades in his courses. I called him aside and suggested that we study together. Not only would he read the entire lesson through without understanding, but he would read it again and again until, parrot-like, he could repeat it. I explained to him that in order for him to learn, he had to have some understanding of what he was reading. I had him read the first paragraph aloud, then asked him to summarize it. He had paid no attention to an understanding of what he read. Again the student tried. This time, because he knew he would have to summarize it, his attention was held by his will and he was able to repeat one of the principal ideas. He was told to write the gist of the paragraph in a word or a sentence as a means of recalling it. In like manner he was asked to read

and summarize the second, third, and fourth paragraphs, until finally, with the help of the summaries, he was able to explain the lesson, though still inadequately. Then he was told to re-read the first paragraph for important ideas that were not grasped in his first reading. When he found one, he was instructed to write it in its proper relation to the others. The résumé completed, the student was able to recite the whole lesson with the aid of his summaries. Only a few repetitions were needed before he could recite it without notes.

Many a hidden talent would shine like a diamond if it were polished by learning how to concentrate. One of the best means of doing so is to ask oneself questions about the subject-matter and to try to find the answers in one's reading, or else to read with a pencil in hand, making summaries. To those who object that in this way it is impossible to finish one's task may be applied the Roman adage, «*Festinabis lente*»—«You will make haste slowly.» Why? Because by following this method, fewer repetitions will be necessary. The first attempts will be difficult, but, as one's synthetic powers develop, the work will be done quickly and the possession of many truths in fruitful syntheses will be a source of pleasure.

d) Pathological exhaustion. This may result from working with parasitic ideas—your study and your unsolved problems, for example; from prolonged attention without sufficient rest; from working in a hurry or with anxiety. Such exhaustion may result also from working without compensating satisfaction, from

worrying about success or from asking greater accomplishments than could be reasonably expected from your time and talents. Given any one or a combination of such factors, in time your hand and brow may feel pain, heaviness, heat, or tension. Then sad and depressing ideas may assail your consciousness.

If you are undergoing that stress, you may find it difficult to direct your attention for a half hour or maybe less. You will feel fatigue. The best remedy is simply not to think of yourself and your pain but rather to concentrate on what you are doing in a peaceful and agreeable manner. The reason for this is that every feeling of fatigue increases when you think about it, whereas it decreases—even disappears—when you place all your attention joyfully on something else. But how can you achieve this? How can you forget yourself? If you do find this difficult, seek the advice of the family doctor or a psychiatrist because some deep, unknown cause may be active in your subconscious. In that case it might help to travel, to change your occupation and environment, to learn to rest through conscious sensations, and finally to practise the exercises prescribed by Dr. Roger Vittoz in Lausanne.² These exercises, which I shall explain, can be very helpful not only for cases of overwork, but even for simple mental wandering.

1 *Visual external concentration.* If, as you make a single dot, you think only of that dot, your concentration will last but a second. If you prolong that dot

² Dr. Roger Vittoz (d. 1925), *Traitement des Psychoneuroses par la Rééducation du contrôle cérébrale.*

into a straight line without thinking of anything else, your concentration will last a few seconds. With muscles and nerves relaxed, now trace, with your finger, in the air each of the figures below, with no interruption in their trajectory, trying to follow the outline attentively and naturally.

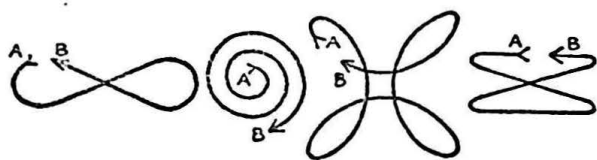


Figure 1

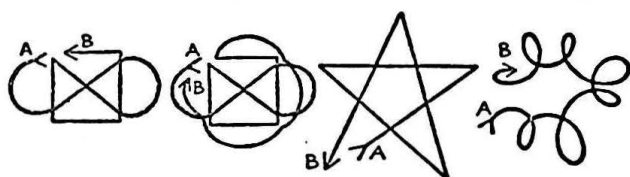


Figure 2

Another student once came to me in considerable concern about the great amount of mental wandering in his study. There was no particular focal point around which his distractions would come and go. In compliance with my suggestion, he began to do these suggested exercises for about five minutes in the morning, at noon, in the afternoon, and at night. Within four days he could do them naturally and without distractions. From there he went on to execute more demanding exercises which require a more prolonged attention.

The student was next taught to trace in the air

giant capital letters and whole words in which there was to be no break in the continuity, and he was at all times, and with tranquil attention, to keep his eyes on his finger. After ten days of this somewhat artificial education, the young man was able to leave these crutches behind and apply his attention to the book he was studying. He had no difficulty in making résumés of short paragraphs, then longer passages, then a half-page at a single reading.

A businessman was on the verge of a collapse from excessive work and nervous tension. He went to Dr. George W. Hall, an eminent neurologist. When the diagnosis revealed that there was no acute organic lesion of any kind, the patient asked for a treatment which would permit him to adapt himself as soon as possible to the rhythms of his accelerated life. Dr. Hall suggested that he have an aquarium of tropical fish built in his private office and that he spend an hour every day peacefully watching the graceful convolutions of those little creatures. A bit nonplussed at first, the businessman nonetheless followed the prescription faithfully. Before the year was out, he sent a donation to Dr. Hall's hospital in gratitude for his cure. The fish were tracing out the type of maneuvers which we here recommend.

2. *Internal Visual Concentration.* It will sometimes be helpful to do the same maneuvers mentally, without the aid of your hand, as if upon a blackboard. Practice this, too, for several days.

3. *Auditory Concentration.* We shall explain auditory concentration in the form of an actual case.

One lady found it hard to follow speeches and lectures. Her efforts to concentrate on each such occasion brought on such a nervous strain that she had to leave the hall several times. The slightest noise would awaken her at night and, whether at home or in the office, she could not read or write if there were even the sounds of people moving about. For several days this lady exercised herself by seeking out and giving full and deliberate attention to various noises. She would, for example, follow the sound of a clock, mentally saying and hearing «Tick-tock, tick-tock.» On the first day she followed for ten seconds with perfect concentration; on the second day she reached fifteen; on the fourth, more than twenty without a thought of anything else. To this exercise she gave at the most five minutes each time, but she did it about eight times a day. Once the lady had satisfactorily obtained this auditory concentration, she went on to listen voluntarily to an address or lecture. At first she listened for ten, then fifteen minutes or more with no distractions or fear of distractions. When these did occur, her only care was to fix her attention anew on what was being said. She further undertook to do these exercises in the midst of noise and other people's conversations. Within one month this woman was able to work peacefully and tranquilly.

4) Concentration on reading. Fix your attention on what you read until the end of the first sentence. Deliberately pause for a few moments and enjoy conscious sensations. Now read the second sentence, pause, and so on until the whole page is completed. This exercise,

an excellent method for restraining that excessive haste and anxiety to reach the end (which causes so much fatigue) should be practiced three times daily. If weariness is experienced only when reading and not so much when listening to a talk or a lecture, the cause may be located in tense or nervous eyes.

e) Lack of interest or a contrary greater attraction. Lack of interest is the most frequent subjective cause of our distraction and the reason for most of our failures and mental inefficiency. However, we can treat this in detail more logically in Part II.

Nevertheless, let us point out a cause and a remedy for the distressing «loss of the thread» by an orator or a musician. What we know «by heart» will be produced spontaneously, provided no other stronger thought takes entire possession of our consciousness. If the intruding idea occupies the mind slightly and without forcefulness, the subconscious thread of memory will remain unbroken. Intruding ideas of a strong and all-embracing nature are usually emotional in origin, and are frequently laden with fear. Thus, for example, clergymen, who under ordinary circumstances say prayers or sing unperturbed without looking at the book, become flustered, make mistakes and need the book in moments of special solemnity or in the presence of dignitaries. Pianists who, in private, can play difficult pieces from memory, suddenly shiver momentarily and are at a loss to continue when the thought of possible failure takes possession of them.

The remedy consists in preventing such thoughts

from occupying one's mind entirely. We should take the lead ourselves by paying closer attention to what we are doing or by putting into our subconscious mind the opposite tendencies and feelings. This is not always so easy, especially when disturbing feelings and tendencies come from unconscious transfers or repressions of an early age.

Distraction in Prayer

To be distracted in prayer means that we leave God for the sake of creatures, that we prefer nothingness to the infinite. Since creatures (including ourselves) are but grains of sand in comparison with the immensity of God, we ought, at least in times of prayer, to offer ourselves and our full attention, as far as we are able, to Him.

Suppose, during an audience with some great personage, we were to turn our attention from his person or his words to scrutinize his furniture. To be present there and not pay full attention to him would be both silly and rude. What should we think, then, of the person who is about to spend a few minutes or an hour with the infinitely wise, good and powerful God, and who does so with little attention or interest?

Incalculable damage may result from voluntary distraction, not only because we have wasted the time we were to spend in communion with God, not only because of the offense against Him by the practical neglect of His infinite dignity, but, in addition, be-

cause of the loss of those supernatural lights which could transform us and of those consolations which would make us despise the insignificance of this world.

Involuntary distractions do not arouse the wrath of God; rather they call forth His mercy, especially if we atone for them by greater humility and trust, and if we try to remedy the situation by discovering and removing their causes.

Remote Causes of Distraction

1. Organic or psychic weakness.
2. Dissipated life.
3. Tepid or sinful behavior.

1. Organic or psychic weakness. If this is your case, use the remedies indicated earlier and humbly accept your limitations. Be satisfied with a simple affective prayer, with the realization that you are in the presence of God. «He looks at me and I look at Him.» This should be your attitude as it was that of the little old man referred to by the Curé of Ars. He used to spend long hours in the church, simply realizing where he was and feeling intense joy just to be in God's presence. Such «keeping watch» before the eternal King is not a waste of time. Repeat ejaculations expressing humility, trust, thanksgiving, petition, etc.

Some minds are dull and heavy in the early morning so that concentration on prayer is difficult until these people have had breakfast or have performed

some work requiring active and creative attention. This may be due to the way they sleep.

Some people fall asleep immediately and enjoy a profound sleep. While they are unaware of noises during the night, they do hear the noises toward morning when their sleep is lighter. When they get up, they feel immediately clear-headed and experience little difficulty in their morning prayers. Other people, on the contrary, require a long period of time before they fall asleep and do not achieve depth in their slumber until several hours have elapsed. These will be more prone to feel drowsiness in the morning with concomitant difficulty in morning prayer.

The weary and the nervous cannot be expected to devote an hour to prayer, sometimes not even a half hour, without frequent distractions. Let them make up for their incapacity by humility and patience, making use of the affective and volitional element as will be explained in Parts II and III.

2. Dissipated life. This may come from excessive absorption in amusements, external activity and ambition for success. When we forget God throughout the day or when we attach inordinate importance to the temporal and human, then during prayer our thoughts will wander to these preoccupations. When we pursue success for our own sake and, perhaps, to the virtual exclusion of God, we shall be disturbed in our prayer by worries about attaining it. This will be especially true if we spend our lives in useless occupations, in excessive seeking after pleasures, and, above all, in sin. Hence, the best remote preparation

for prayer is always to act with a pure intention, overcoming and sacrificing ourselves to God, in an effort to recall His divine presence.

3. *Tepidity and sinfulness.* The life of tepidity, of voluntary offenses against the Lord, of habitual failure to care about pleasing Him creates in the soul an effective barrier which prevents us from entering into communion with Him whom we offend. This also prevents the offended majesty of God from granting His choicest gifts. Contrition and sincere humility, however, will once more gain for us His infinite mercy.

Proximate Causes of Wandering Attention

1. Lack of immediate preparation.
2. Negligence at the outset.
3. Superficial attention to God's presence.

1. *Lack of immediate preparation.* When awaiting an interview with some important person, we carefully prepare what we are going to say. With far greater reason we should be even better prepared when we enter the presence of Him who is infinitely good and mighty. We should know concretely and specifically the fruit we wish to derive from this audience as well as the thoughts, affections and resolutions with which we are going to occupy ourselves while in His presence. By way of preparation we can gather ideas from a meditation book or from a page of the Gospels. From their own experience the saints tell us that to enter into prayer without precise preparation is to

seek His choicest graces without putting forth a reverential effort from the means at our disposal—particularly in the beginning.

Even in vocal prayer we can attain greater fruit and consolation, as well as attentiveness, if we adopt a concrete method. For example, one day we could think about the dignity and goodness of the Person we are addressing; another day, about our own unworthiness and misery, or about the grace we ask for. We could also try to increase our humility, trust, or love. These affections should be the background against which the words of prayer are spoken. Children and simple old people frequently attain great concentration and draw much fruit and consolation simply by considering the mysteries as they recite the Rosary.

A word of caution is now in order. An excessive use of prepared considerations may cause confusion and mental wandering. A hunter who tries to follow several deer at the same time will not catch any. The same is true of one who tries to seek out too many ideas or details in his prayer. This is the reason why many, who find it impossible to enter into intimacy with God through detailed meditation, attain their goal more readily when they fathom the depths of a single mystery or contemplate it as a whole—particularly when they dwell upon the intentions and love of Our Lord in a specified situation.

2. Negligence at the outset. Distraction in prayer is most frequently due to the fact that we do not truly begin; we do not withdraw completely from what is earthly. We sometimes fail to realize that for a given

time we must leave the earth and mount to heaven; we neglect to enliven our faith with the realization that the God with whom we speak is not far away, not indifferent, that He is within us, hears us, sees us, and loves us. This closeness is achieved by the «composition of place,» recommended by St. Ignatius of Loyola, in which we use our imagination to vivify the scene on which we are meditating or to place ourselves next to Christ as He speaks and teaches.

If we perform these first acts with complete attention and venerate God with the most profound reverence and humility from the innermost depths of our being, the remaining acts will follow along quite naturally. Divine grace will carry the greater part of the burden and will achieve its fruit within us. Accordingly, we should ask for divine grace over and over again, snatching it from God, so to speak, by the power of our humility, our trust and our perseverance. God is only too happy to give it to us; all He wants is that we ask for it in the proper spirit. Given His help, it is easy for us to contribute the relatively paltry share of our own diligence and attention.

3. *Superficial attention to God's presence.* «Few persons attain to that intimate union which my Heart prepares for them in this life,» Our Lord once said to a holy soul. «They must recollect all their thoughts and affections and concentrate them on Me, since I am present in the most intimate recesses of their souls. I invite them, lovingly and insistently, to descend into the depths of their being, there to unite themselves

to Me, never again to leave Me, and to identify themselves with Me. The blessings I promise them are so great! How few realize that I am there in the depths of their souls, burning with the desire to unite them to Myself and make them happy! The reason for this is that they live only in the exterior of their being. If they would only withdraw from what is sensible and penetrate into the innermost recesses of their souls where I am, they would quickly find Me. What a life of union, love and light they would enjoy! »

RESUME

Distraction	{ The lamp of the intellect shifting to some irrelevant spot. { The soul's center of activity deviating from the goal. { To lose track; to stop advancing.									
Effects of Distraction	{ Efficiency and joy decreases (scattered sunbeams). { Fatigue and disgust increase: new adjustment.									
Causes of Distraction	<table> <tr> <td data-bbox="627 473 850 569" rowspan="3"> { <i>Objective</i> (in the book or teacher) </td><td data-bbox="859 441 1362 500"> { Way and goal unknown: going nowhere. </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="859 505 1362 563"> { Way blocked: explanation too difficult. </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="859 569 1197 601"> { Way boring or tiresome. </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="627 633 850 734" rowspan="4"> { <i>Subjective</i> (in the student) </td><td data-bbox="859 617 1115 649"> { Organic weakness </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="859 654 1065 686"> { Dissipated life </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="859 691 1131 723"> { Untrained attention </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="859 728 1189 755"> { Pathological exhaustion </td></tr> </table>	{ <i>Objective</i> (in the book or teacher)	{ Way and goal unknown: going nowhere.	{ Way blocked: explanation too difficult.	{ Way boring or tiresome.	{ <i>Subjective</i> (in the student)	{ Organic weakness	{ Dissipated life	{ Untrained attention	{ Pathological exhaustion
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{ <i>Subjective</i> (in the student)	{ Organic weakness									
	{ Dissipated life									
	{ Untrained attention									
	{ Pathological exhaustion									
Remedies for Distraction	<table> <tr> <td data-bbox="627 760 1329 824" rowspan="6"> { Re-invigorate your body with a well-balanced diet. { Keep recollected. { Summarize paragraphs in writing. { Relate them, one to the other. { Formulate questions and look for answers. { Re-educate your attention { Stir interest </td><td data-bbox="1131 931 1263 1016" rowspan="6"> { Seeing { Hearing { Reading </td></tr> <tr></tr> <tr></tr> <tr></tr> <tr></tr> <tr></tr> </table>	{ Re-invigorate your body with a well-balanced diet. { Keep recollected. { Summarize paragraphs in writing. { Relate them, one to the other. { Formulate questions and look for answers. { Re-educate your attention { Stir interest	{ Seeing { Hearing { Reading							
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I

CHAPTER 4

Obsessed (Compulsive) Attention

OUR EFFICIENCY WILL BE MINIMAL and of short duration, while fatigue will be at its maximum, if, while trying to concentrate on an article or lecture, our consciousness is beset by worry, passion, unpleasant memories, etc. The lamp of our intellect, trying to illuminate a treasure in order to possess and enjoy it, finds that another object of thought interposes itself insistently, preventing us from enjoying the treasure with any degree of equanimity. This situation is similar to what occurs in a typewriter when two keys are struck at once: the letters are blurred. In like manner, nothing is so exhausting, nothing causes more cases of nervous exhaustion or «over-work» as when the brain must function while burdened with parasitic ideas, worries, nervousness and obsessions.

Exaggerated ideal or excessive competition. An office worker whom I met in Spain complained of cerebral fatigue, nervousness, discouragement and restless sleep. In questioning him I learned that he had registered for four courses at a workers' university. This meant rushing home from his work to prepare for class, then rushing from home to two classes every night, then rushing home for additional study into the late hours. He arose early each morning for work. This schedule permitted no social life, no amusement, no exercise in sports.

«Perhaps your ideal is beyond your capacity,» I suggested, «for, if someone aims at 100 and is capable only of 50, all attempts to surpass 50 will be attended by violent exertion and psychic and neuromuscular tensions.»

The man opened his eyes widely as if he had discovered a whole new world.

«You are right,» he told me. «Now I understand my difficulty. I've been trying to do too much in too short a time.»

He dropped out of two courses, postponing them to the following year. In short order he recovered his peace of mind.

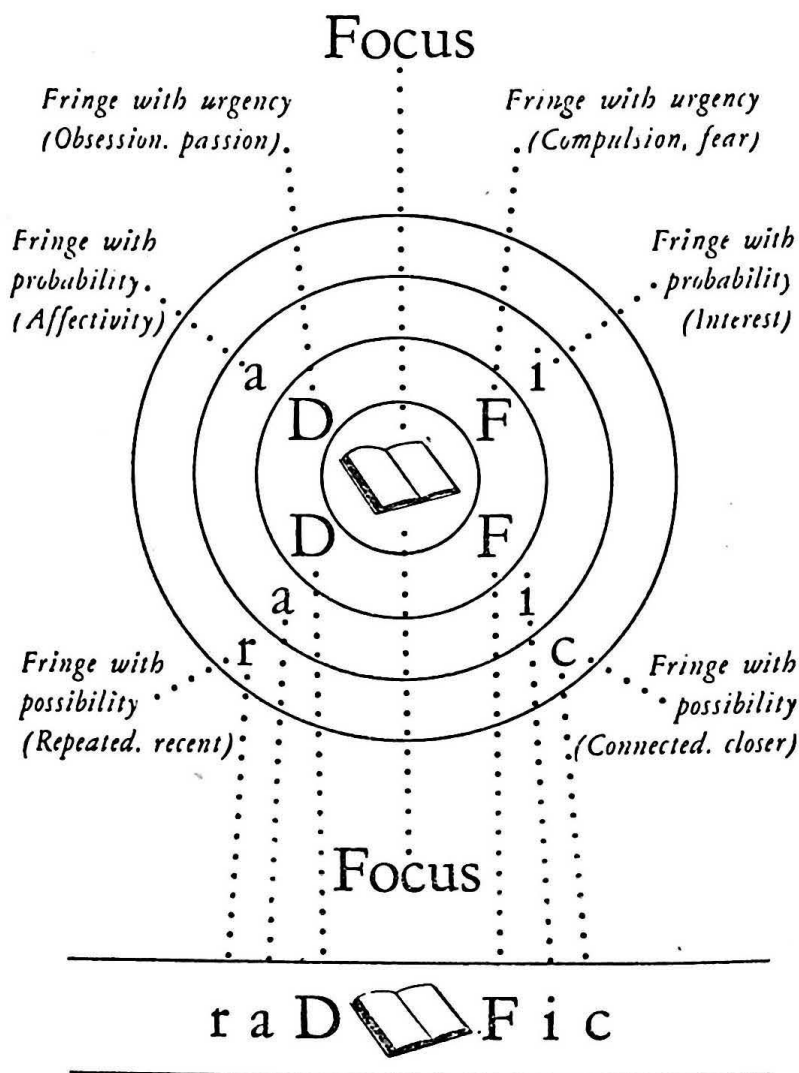
A quarter of an hour of such disorganized effort is more tiring than two hours spent working with perfect concentration, and a quarter of an hour of rest will hardly repair the resultant waste of energy. Even a full night's sleep will not suffice to compensate for a day spent under such tension. Why? Because, first of all, falling asleep will itself be difficult; secondly,

when slumber does come, it will likely be uneasy with disturbing dreams or even nightmares.

Picture someone setting out with a precise destination in mind. He makes no detours whatsoever on his journey. He arrives at his destination on time and showing no great fatigue. This may be likened to working with concentration. Now picture a swimmer who encounters a strong, adverse current and obstacles in his path. Not only does it take him a long time to reach his destination, if, indeed, he reaches it at all, but he is exhausted when he does get there. This may be likened to working under pressure, obsessing ideas, mental wandering and the like in which neither peace nor satisfaction will be gained. Unless there is concentration of some duration, accompanied by tranquility, the matter under study will not be fixed in our memory and intellectual enrichment will be lost.

To understand better the process of mental wandering and of obsession, we may represent our thinking mind by the diagram (see page 58) of concentric circles and our thoughts by objects on the table. In the center is the focal point of attention: the object we see or think about with perfect clarity, of which we are perfectly conscious. It is here represented by a book. At the same time, however, there are other objects or ideas on which our attention is not directly focused, but of which we are conscious to a certain extent, or which may easily attract our attention. They are in the concentric circles, on the fringe or periphery of our attention as, for example, the objects

FIELD OF ATTENTION



to be found on either side of one's work table. They appear blurred and are seen only indirectly as one reads or writes, but, with a turn of one's head, they come clearly into focus.

Only one word, one idea, one object, or a group of them forming a unit can occupy the focal point of our attention at any given moment, but there can be many objects on the fringes of our consciousness; e. g.:

- a) objects that may *possibly* become the center of attention;
- b) objects that will *probably* become the center of attention;
- c) objects that *urgently demand* to be the center of attention.

To the first group belong those objects or experiences which are more recent or more repeated (r) and those that are closer or have a certain connection (c) with the main subject. These may possibly, though not necessarily, come to occupy the focal center.

The second group consists of those objects or experiences in which interest (i) and affection (a), whether of pleasure or aversion, are involved. These have a greater likelihood of reaching the center of our attention.

To the third group belong those objects or experiences which most affect the *ego*, those that are greatly desired or feared which are represented in the diagram by d and f. If these great desires or fears, known as obsessions or compulsions, exist, they will

lay siege to, and earnestly struggle to occupy, the focus of attention. In their sustained struggle to occupy the center of the consciousness, they often overcome the will to dwell only on what we are working at or studying. They take possession of the mind so frequently that it seems as if we are following two ideas at the same time. Though we frequently speak of this as «double attention,» actually and most likely there is only a very rapid shift from one idea to the other.¹

Consequently, in order to avoid this obsessed attention which is such a hindrance to mental work, it is necessary, first, to discover and then, insofar as it is possible, to channel, or moderate, or to destroy, if need be, those exaggerated desires and fears which struggle to take possession of us or to depress us. For it is by these two ways that parasitic ideas come to us.

Impulsive parasitic ideas come from	{	Exaggerated	Depressive parasitic ideas come from	{	Fear
		ideal			Depression
		Excessive			Unsolved
		competition			problems
		Unbridled			
		passion			

A very ordinary experience of my own will illustrate how frequently we do set an exaggerated goal for

¹In this practical manual written for the average person we do not intend to deal with abnormal attention due to unconscious causes which are often the root of compulsions. The help of a psychiatrist will here be necessary.

ourselves. I was sitting in a waiting room, with a half hour to spare before my appointment. I noticed a book there which I had wanted to read for some time. In my anxiety to absorb as much as possible in such a short space of time, I did manage to complete a substantial portion of the book. At the end of the half hour I was exhausted.

Why is it that reading the newspaper is sometimes tiring? Simply because, in a limited space of time, we read it hurriedly and anxiously, motivated by a desire to satisfy our curiosity about as much of the news as possible. We are working with two ideas: the news that interests us (and which occupies the center of our attention) and the subconscious urge of completing the newspaper as soon as possible. This urge at the fringe of our attention is repeatedly trying to occupy the focus and to expel from it the voluntary thoughts about the news. This psychological act lacks plenitude and unity. It gives us neither satisfaction nor happiness, and, instead of improving our mind, it does it harm. Whoever works habitually in this way will soon feel exhausted. This danger threatens enthusiastic young people who are spurred on to secure the best possible education and personal preparation for high achievement. They would be well advised to recognize also their limitations of strength and time.

Many fervent young people, deeply stirred by the sublimity of prayer, virtue, the apostolate, sanctity, etc., launch out in pursuit of their ideal under great nervous tension. Forgetting that all growth is

slow and gradual, they are impatient to attain perfection at once by sheer force of will. When entrusted with an assignment, they react with such intensity that they do not know how to rest or how occasionally to shift their thoughts from the attainment of that particular goal. Theirs is activity without peace.

In all these cases, there seems to be a subtle inversion of values. Such people take direct, unswerving aim at success (a limited human value), but they lose sight of the divine value of their every activity. For the highest value of a human act is derived precisely from its conformity to the divine will in fulfillment of duty. Man and all things human, when compared with God, are as pennies compared to a million dollars. For all their intense and almost ceaseless activity, these people are sadly lacking the fullness of satisfaction that should be theirs if they acted with the conviction that they were actualizing the ideal set before them by Infinite Wisdom. On the other hand, they torture themselves with anxiety and nerve-wracking haste to attain that human goal in which they will be able to find only incomplete satisfaction.

The *remedy* consists of a simple choice: either increase one's power or lower one's ideal. This does not, in reality, mean that we should not aim at great achievements; rather, we must take things calmly; we must stop acting on irrational impulses; we must not allow ourselves to be blinded to true values by Utopian ideals.

There is no good reason why anyone should hurry to finish a work of duty in order to devote himself

to something else. The performance of one's proper duty is the greatest act possible at the moment, and precisely because it is God's will. No other occupation at the moment can merit greater glory.

Probably right here lies one of the causes of emotional imbalance among persons consecrated to God: some of them unconsciously invert the hierarchy of values, at least on the level of emotion or of action. Their sense of security and plenitude, which in the noviceship was based on the conviction that they were loved by God and were fulfilling the divine ideal, little by little has lost its forcefulness. They begin to take pleasure and seek self-assurance in human success. When this success is finally lost through illness, old age, or adverse circumstances, their personalities are shaken to their foundations.

Consider this very typical case. Faced with a tremendous pile of examination papers to correct, a university professor was driven almost mad at the thought of the seeming endlessness of the task. Working at a maddening pace and dreading the amount of work yet to be faced, he was soon overcome by weariness. Today he places the heap of papers behind him, takes one at a time, and corrects it quietly as if he had nothing else to do. He does not allow himself to see how many still remain to be done. In this way he finishes his work calmly and without fatigue.

Or someone will begin to read an assigned book. Too much of the time he is thinking of the chapters that are still to be read. Similarly, the secretary who, while typing letters, keeps thinking of all the others

still to be typed. This girl risks working with parasitic ideas and, consequently, of suffering nervousness and fatigue.

Different people try different remedies to overcome this sense of hurry in their reading, writing, typing, etc. They simply determine that they will undertake nothing else until the assignment is completed. Others bridle their haste in reading or typing, for example, merely by covering the lines below, then uncovering them, one by one. Still others go right to the organic root of their nervousness and relax the muscles of their eyes and forehead and take deeper breaths. Once more, however, a word of caution is in order. There is always the chance of deep, unconscious causes of these conditions, and in such cases, of course, a psychiatrist should be consulted.

Unbridled passion. A student entered the Colegio de Belen in Havana, Cuba, with a magnificent scholastic record, and great things were expected of him. When he was sixteen years of age, his father, who had no idea of how to educate his son properly, provided him with a vacation and the means to enjoy himself in any way at all, even in forbidden ways. The boy took full advantage of this freedom. Not very long after his return to classes the following term, he was listed among the poorest students. During his study periods and his classes the student's gaze would wander.

His professors were dismayed.

«Aren't you ashamed of yourself?» they would

ask, «You have always led your class. Get back to work and study!»

Usually the boy was silent. One day, however, he burst into tears.

«Professor,» he tried to explain, «I lived like a pig during my vacation. Now I can think of nothing else.» His attention, he was smart enough to recognize, kept wandering back to his days of sexual indulgence. And, of course, his is no isolated case. Many university students have admitted to me regretfully, on recalling their former intellectual brilliance and excellent memory, that their deficiencies at the time stemmed from habitual sexual excesses and preoccupation with pleasure.

To such as these is referred the wisdom of that profound thinker and poet, Gar-Mar: «Do you wish to have angelic understanding? First ask God for the heart of an angel. When one's heart is pure as crystal, one's eyes become clearer. Nothing so opens the mind as the fragrance of lilies.»² Nor is it without cause that, because of his purity, one of the most profound thinkers of the ages, Thomas Aquinas, is called the «Angel of the Schools.» Nor can the testimony of Infinite Wisdom itself be disregarded: «Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God [Absolute Truth].»

Modern endocrinology shows that the products of sexual glands, when reabsorbed by continence, are a source of important nutritive elements: 20% calcium, 30% phosphorus, potash, magnesium, esper-

² *Sugercências*, by Vincent Garcia Martinez, S.J.

min, coleslerin, etc., which invigorate the nervous system. Ruy Barbosa, the famous Brazilian scholar and statesman, attributed the lucidity of his intellect to the continence he practiced all his life, and to the perfect chastity of his final years.

Parasitic depressive ideas. If impulsive parasitic ideas impede our concentration, parasitic depressive ideas are much more disturbing. These are: ideas of fear, worry, insecurity, anxiety, doubts, etc., whether they are reduced to a vague tendency toward insecurity, or whether they envisage concretely some temporal evil such as loss of health, fortune, reputation, or life. These ideas are particularly violent when they concern an eternal or transcendent evil, whether reasonable or without foundation.

In any case, it is difficult to concentrate on the work at hand so long as our problems remain unsolved in our mind or, if they are insoluble, so long as our imagination gives them an exaggerated importance. Problems which have no solution are no longer problems and should not cause any worry; they are painful realities which will lose their sting and will not interfere with our attention as soon as we accept them fully for what they are.

A student in Central America reached a point where he could recall hardly any of his lessons, although six months previously he had enjoyed a good memory. In consequence he left the university. Unduly upset by a friend of his who was worrying about a slight deformity of his face, he himself, in short order, also began to worry and to convince himself

that his own smile was abnormal. This conviction was with him constantly. Following two months of treatment, he overcame this obsession, regained his power of concentration and his memory, and he was able to resume his studies.

Following his own cure, the young student brought his sister to me. In her last written examination the young lady had received a «zero» despite the fact that she had known the lesson perfectly. At the outset I surmised that she was probably suffering from a sense of insecurity or fear. From childhood, I soon learned, both the brother and his sister had witnessed scenes of violence between their father, who had no self-control, and their long-suffering mother. When the test questions were given out in the examination hall, fear gripped the young lady's mind and inhibited her memory, making it impossible for her to recall or write what she knew. I urged her to destroy or weaken this feeling of insecurity through acts, thoughts and expressions of courage at every opportunity and especially in association with the prospect of the examination which so disturbed her. After she had tried this formula, the young lady felt greatly improved and encouraged. (I have explained this in the book *Achieving Peace of Heart*.) And months later her brother brought me the good news that his sister had attained high grades in her examinations.

When temporal insecurity becomes a torturing obsession, it may be advisable to consult a reliable spiritually-minded psychiatrist, for the cause may be hidden in the subconscious mind. Still, very often the

trouble may have its roots in lack of faith or in placing too great a value on what is earthly and temporal—a value which assumes too great importance when separated from what is heavenly and eternal. If a man lacks security in his most urgent problems, as, for example, in those concerning his origin and destiny, all other securities are left without a solid foundation. A return to transcendental values, a few days' retreat given over to meditating on these values, will prove the best remedy.

Dr. Viktor Frankl, the noted psychiatrist, a disciple of Allers and head of the Association of Psychiatrists in Austria, has come to the conclusion, after a long scientific experience, that many of the neuroses from which men suffer are caused by unconscious repression of the feeling for and tendency toward God and one's own supreme destiny, and not so much by the repression of the sexual instinct. When our vision of the eternal and divine becomes blurred or is repressed, the human and temporal problems acquire exaggerated proportions.

If in our own case it is a question of transcendent insecurity caused by the weight of some grave moral guilt on our conscience, it will be useless to seek palliatives or to try to still that interior voice. The festering sore must be opened as soon as possible, and the pus and poison must be drawn out. We can accomplish this only by turning once more to God.

Intellectual doubt concerning transcendental matters, as, for example, religion, is also apt to disturb the peace and depth of our concentration. The dif-

ficulty should be solved as soon as possible by consultations with specialists or through the study of the motives of credibility in good books.

On the other hand, that other tormenting doubt caused by scruples which sometimes besets people who lead holy lives should be speedily attacked by means of the combined help of the psychiatrist and the spiritual director.

SUMMARY

Obsessed Attention	{	Parasitic ideas Emotional illness Powerful contrary attractions
Effects	{	Impression is less clear and less lasting Fatigue is at a maximum: exhaustion Nervousness, tension, insomnia, dreams Distaste, pain
Causes	{	Impulsive ideas Depressive ideas

Impulsive Ideas

<i>Causes</i>	<i>Remedy</i>
Utopian ideal	Reasonable ideal; accept limitations
Limited time and/or capacities	Increase time-helps
Excessive rivalry—hurry	Moderate it
Unbridled passion	Suppress it

Depressive Ideas

<i>Causes</i>	<i>Remedy</i>
Vague insecurity	Acts, thoughts, attitudes of courage
Family or social conflicts	Solution or acceptance
Temporary insecurity	Despise what is passing
Transcendent doubt	Clarify it—seek instruction
Scrupulous conscience	Ignore it—spiritual direction
Guilty conscience	Relieve it—confession

I

CHAPTER 5

Reflective (Elaborating Attention)

REFLECTION MEANS GIVING repeated attention to a subject. It is the light of understanding pouring its rays once more over a treasure, differentiating it from similar ones, focusing on interesting details or bringing out relationships with others. It is not merely a receptive or passive attention, but rather a creative action. To reflect means to reason; to find associations between ideas. It means to set them in order, to classify and to unify them, to draw conclusions. It means to read thoughtfully, to listen critically, to observe what we see. It is to build the Palace of Knowledge.

It is not enough to gather bricks, stones and cement in order to build a palace. They must be arranged

according to a plan. Neither is it enough, if we wish to build the Palace of Knowledge, to collect items of information by merely fixing our attention on them. Relationships must be established as unity and order. Schopenhauer used to say to his disciples: «Never read; always study.» In other words, seek something in your reading: the clarification of ideas, the solution of doubts, the answers to questions, the unification of your knowledge and its relation to other facts. Passive reading has little value. Those who fall asleep easily at a lecture are usually those whose attention is purely receptive. If they were to pay attention creatively by taking notes, making résumés, etc., they would conquer sleepiness.

Reflection is the second activity of the mind, a constituent of mental activity, or, to complete a previous statement, we may say that creative concentration is the main tool of human greatness.

Creative Concentration = root of { mental ability
will power
human greatness

Elaborating mind { Our idéal, or purpose
relates new { Our knowledge to perfect it
information to { Objective truth { Is it certain
or probable?

Classifies, unites ideas { Cause-effect = Science
Part-whole = Unity
Essential-accidental = Clarity

Many threads of most varied colors, if not connected in some way, will never form an artistic piece of embroidery. Many items of information and many varied types of erudition will not suffice to make a learned man, a thinker, a scientist. The Palace of Knowledge will be perfected only if the proper relationships are established between new ideas and those already possessed (discovering what they added to the old); if we determine whether this new information is of an essential or accidental value and if we establish its proper place in the thesis or hypothesis to be developed.

1) Every new knowledge should be brought into relationship with the ideal of our lives or with the aim of our present work. This is called *purposeful association*.

2) We must establish relationships between the new experience and the old, between cause and effect, between the part and the whole, between what is accidental and what is essential. We must distinguish between what is true, false, or probable; between the truth that is proven and what is merely hypothetical. We must work out our own examples, comparisons and proofs. All these constitute *intellectual association*.

Excessive attention to movies and television destroys or prevents the formation of this useful habit of intellectual association. The elements of knowledge given by these media are too rapidly received, and no time is given for reflection.

1. Purposeful Association

Associate, or relate, all new elements of knowledge to your ideal. For this reason, the first requirement to be demanded of all students and researchers is that they possess a great, guiding idea, an ideal which will both impel and sustain their efforts, which will be the guiding light on which all their studies will be enthusiastically focused.

This may be the reason why, in some nations, children of wealthy families often make less progress in their studies than the children of the poor under the same conditions. They lack the ideal of the poor to educate themselves for the purpose of earning their livelihood, since the rich believe that theirs is already assured. A recent report from the Congo, from the integrated schools in Elizabethville, showed a clear advantage of the colored pupils over the white who belong to well-to-do families.

2. Intellectual Association

a) Associate your new knowledge with what is already known. Before beginning to read a book, study a lesson, or listen to a lecture, remember what you already know about the subject and relate that knowledge to what you are hearing or reading. As you read, classify the new ideas, place them alongside those you already have, correct, confirm, or perfect

them. Hence, the pedagogical utility of proposing the theme and its parts before beginning the explanation.

In order to learn how to look at a landscape or a work of art, first close your eyes and mentally imagine what you are going to observe. You will be both attracted and thrilled by the difference between what you expected to see and what you do actually observe.

If you want to learn how to listen to a symphony or how to appreciate any sound, first close your eyes and imagine what kind of sound you are going to hear.

To read a book more profitably, first inspect the title and the table of contents. Then close the book and guess its contents. This was the method used by that profound philosopher and prolific writer, Balmes.¹ Before reading the book and guided only by the chapter listings, he tried to imagine the contents of each chapter, the development from chapter to chapter, etc. Then he would begin to read the book, passing rapidly over chapters where he could find nothing new, concentrating with joy on those of new, real value.

To study means not only to select what interests you, but, more so, to extract from this selection that which is the most interesting.

b) Confront the new knowledge with the objective criteria of truth. Do not accept any information uncritically or without discussion; rather, distinguish what

¹ Jaime Balmes, Spanish philosopher and publicist, 1810-1848. Some of his famous books and articles have been translated into English: *The Criterion*; *Art of Thinking*; *History of European Civilization*; *Elemental Philosophy*, etc.

is true, false, or merely probable, what is established truth as opposed to mere hypothesis. Many psychiatrists, drawn by Freud's wonderful discovery of unconscious forces, accepted, at first, as a proven science all his materialistic and sexualistic hypotheses. Several decades later, however, after many failures and much inefficiency, they were to return to true reality and science. Doctors Victor Frankl and Carusso in Vienna, along with their followers, are among the leading European figures in this direction.

c) *Distinguish between cause and effect.* Science is knowledge through the discovery of causes. Such systematized study is of the essence of classical education and is the understanding followed today in the most advanced countries as well as in ecclesiastical studies. Distinguishing between cause and effect trains thinkers to be capable of setting problems before themselves and of finding their solution. On the other hand, that encyclopedic training which still holds an ascendancy in less advanced countries, results in a multiplicity of courses and an overburdened program. The student, overwhelmed by thousands of notions, too often unconnected, is surfeited with erudition that he is unable to digest. He remains incapable of judging for himself, as a direct result.

Even in the business world, where technical training would seem to be the determining factor in the selection of executives and managers, preference is commonly given to the persons who have a proven intellectuality and sound judgment. They are equipped mentally to absorb, to organize, to predict.

d) *Relate the part to the whole, the essential to the accidental.* If this is done, then, when you recall the whole, you will easily remember its parts, or, on recalling a part, you will evoke the whole to which you had related the parts. In this very book, if you keep in mind the diagram about «Intellectual Life,» you will easily reconstruct the parts already developed. (See diagram on following page.)

INTELLECTUAL LIFE

Receptive attention	Concentrated	{ Effects 4 steps Means
	Distracted	{ Description Effects Causes { subjective objective
	Obsessed	{ Description Effects Causes { impulsive depressive
Elaborating attention	Purposeful	your ideal
	Intellectual	{ the known truth cause-effect

So, before reading a book, study the table of contents in order to have an idea of the whole and the role played by each of its parts.

3. Affective and Representative Association

In addition to this intellectual development proper to the scientist and the thinker, there is another which we cannot overlook and which is predominant in the artist. It is representative association, either sensory (as in the painter, sculptor or musician) or affective (as in all artists, especially the poet).

On perceiving a color or a shape, an artist establishes relationships with others he has seen or conceived. On hearing harmony, a musician recalls others that are similar or opposed, or thoroughly new. He has an emotion and relates it to other feelings previously experienced, recalling the places or scenes where such harmonies or feelings were first perceived.

In the poet, particularly, one sentiment may recall facts, or images, or ideas produced by others that are similar. Any images or ideas laden with feeling will make him experience more profoundly that emotion or another of a similar nature.

Good effects of elaborating attention. Whoever in this manner elaborates what he receives through attention:

a) will possess science, knowing all things in their causes;

b) will have clarity, seeing each idea in its concrete place and in its relationship with everything else;

c) will have unity, referring the part to the whole, and the whole to his ideal or main purpose;

d) will have joy, embracing at a single glance many different elements which enrich and enlighten the vision of the whole.

The greater the unity of vision in the multiplicity of elements, the greater the clarity and simplicity of the mental act; the greater also will be our intellectual happiness, and the more we shall approximate our future happiness in Heaven. There the joy of an entire eternity will be ours, and every simple act of the intellect will give us the pleasure of the whole Truth intuitively known and possessed without boredom.

Practical Means

1. Properly classified filing cards. To read or listen is like travelling in search of knowledge. If, during the trip, we write down whatever impressions we have, if we bring back souvenirs and photos, our impressions will remain more firmly fixed and they will stir the interest of our friends. Our notes, then, are the photos or souvenirs we bring back from our excursions into the fields of knowledge.

The famous writer, Remigio Vilariño, S. J., whose wonderful variety of articles, pamphlets and books surpassed 73,000,000 printed copies during his lifetime, always carried some filing cards with him. He jotted down anything of interest he heard or observed on the bus, on the street, or wherever he might hap-

pen to be. At home, he would copy and classify the information, giving it the proper title and subtitle, and file it away with similar jottings. When he was asked for an article on a given subject, all Father Vilarino had to do was to leaf through his information on that subject, and he had a plentiful supply of information for a pleasant and instructive essay.

2. Underlining. When we read books and magazines which we own, it is a great help to underline in the margin, with one color, whatever interests us for a specific purpose.

With another color we should underline what we wish to analyze or criticize, etc. Thus, when we go over the article, as we should always do, it will be sufficient to read the underlined portions. If the whole article was especially interesting, it would be wise to review it entirely.

3. Outlines—Resumes. To summarize ideas until they are reduced to a few words or to an outline is a proof that we have understood them. When we rid the skeleton of unnecessary details, its relationships are more clearly seen.

RESUME

Intellectual elaboration means	{ to reflect, to think again. to place under headings. to associate, to classify. to compare, to unify. to draw conclusions.
Relate the new idea to	{ your ideal. the already-known. the criteria of truth.
Associate and distinguish	{ cause and effect. accidental and essential. part and whole.
Affective and representative elaboration relates	{ colors, shapes, sounds, feelings, etc.
Fruit: Science, clarity, unity, joy.	
Means	{ filing cards; underlining; resumes.

Reflection (Elaborating Attention) In Prayer

Modern youth, accustomed only to receptive attention required for movies, radio, television, etc., finds it difficult to elaborate its own thoughts and affections in prayer.

A young man, recently received into the novitiate, approached his Master of Novices with this difficulty: «Every night you take fifteen minutes to explain three points on which we are to meditate for one hour on the following morning. Well, I complete my meditation in three minutes. What shall I do in the remaining time?»

When we meditate, pray, read a spiritual book, or listen to a sermon, creative attention is also necessary. St. Ignatius of Loyola repeats this advice after each consideration in his *Spiritual Exercises*. «Reflect about one's self to draw some profit,» considering its relationship with our present needs and drawing practical resolutions, affections or petition. Ignatius also gives different points of view, on which we may reflect, in recounting each mystery in the life of Jesus Christ. He counsels us to ponder on the personalities of the people who are part of the individual meditations—their dignity, their motives, their sanctity, etc.—the words they utter, the deeds they perform. He urges us to meditate not only on what Our Lord said and did, but to see it all in its relation to myself. In relating all these matters to my own spiritual life, I shall then conclude with the determination to per-

form all my actions for Christ and devote all my sufferings to Him.

Having called to mind some supernatural truth or some words or actions of Christ, we should ask ourselves: Is this true? And we should respond with acts of faith. If this is so, what should I have done? The answer will lead us on to acts of humility and contrition. What should I do in the future? We should answer concretely, weighing the motives of suitability, usefulness, honor, pleasure, need, etc., so that the will may embrace it all the more firmly. A well-defined resolution, properly adapted to present needs, is necessary if it is to be efficient and not merely a vague desire or project of sanctity. Considering the example offered by the saints, we should reflect on ourselves, as St. Ignatius did after his conversion when he used to query himself: «Did St. Francis do this? Well, I must do it, too.» In the lives and virtues of the saints we shall find the logical reactions to the teachings and example of Christ. Here we can learn how we should feel and act in order to attain perfection. Here we shall find courage to imitate these saints. Here we shall humble ourselves because we shall see how different from them we are.

When we feel too dull to reason, we shall find help in writing down some of these reflections and applications. As we write, the mind becomes alert and ideas become more clearly defined. However, we should not spend the whole time in writing. Rather let us pass quickly to the affections and petitions.

Here, too, it is necessary to stress that, although

our intellectual acts are important mainly as dispositions for our communion with God, the gift of prayer and the sanctification produced must come to us from Him. «Not I,» said St. Paul, «but the grace of God within me.» Consequently let us make our petitions and have trust, as if all depended upon God; but let us make use of human means as if all depended upon ourselves.

I

CHAPTER 6

Memory

WE KNOW AS MUCH as we remember:

- Memory includes {
- 1) Retention: Preserving what was learned, a storehouse, a library, a possible remembering.
 - 2) Recognition: As a past personal experience: (passive remembering).
 - 3) Reproduction: {
 (Bringing to consciousness: e. g., the librarian finding a book
 (active remembering).

1) Memory presupposes ideas, reasonings, experiences, sensations, action, etc., received by attention. The greater the impression they produced or the attention

we gave them, the greater also the effect remaining in our brain or mind. They are like goods in a storehouse, like books in the library. This is retention or possible recall.

2) These experiences are recognized as personal and of the past. Sometimes, for instance, we know the name of a person—it has certainly been in our consciousness—but we cannot reproduce it at the moment. If several names are suggested in an effort to help us recall, we decidedly reject all others until the right one is pronounced. Our retentiveness kept the name differentiated from others. We know we have it in the storehouse, but right here and now, momentarily, we cannot find it. The spotlight did not turn to it. This is «passive remembering.»

3) *Reproduction*, which is the characteristic of memory, includes the ability of bringing to consciousness material we have learned whenever we want it. It is the spotlight illuminating with sufficient clarity a stored good. It is the librarian who finds the desired book.

Improvement of memory depends on { motivation,
confidence,
methods.

Napoleon addressed thousands of his soldiers by their proper names. The *intention* to keep their names attached to him increased his actual retention.

Boys interested in baseball know «by heart» the names of players and very detailed records of their favorite teams. I know a priest who could tell, with-

out hesitation, the principal saints of any day of the year. As a boy, he once attracted attention because of his ability to recall the saint of the week, and so he became interested in cultivating such a power—and he did.

* If you think that memory is not important, or if you insist to yourself that your own memory is poor and impossible of improvement, your recalling power will, as a result, decline. If a student, even with good innate ability, is convinced that he is stupid, his actual learning performance will be poor. So, foster the desire for a tenacious memory; form the resolution to cultivate it through right methods. Bright horizons will open to you as a consequence of these simple, tested methods.

Every day a great amount of knowledge enters your mind through seeing, hearing, feeling, reading, etc. In a year, in a lifetime, this knowledge can be almost unlimited. If you would retain a tenth of it, how learned you would be! It would profit little to have gained much knowledge by attention and to have elaborated and associated it into solid and scientific syntheses, if, in a few days or months, all was blotted out as if written on sand. A library in which millions of books are simply piled up without system or classification, or, for that matter, without a librarian to find them, would be next to useless.

A great professor, whom I once knew, at the age of sixty-two lost his memory to such a degree that not only was he unable to speak of his speciality, but he was unable, even after he had just left the

dining room to recall that he had eaten! He would re-enter the dining room to have his meal shortly after he had eaten. When he left his living quarters, he was unable to return to them alone. He simply did not recall where he was living.

How great a treasure we have in our memory! It is at once a marvelous library and a librarian, guarding thousands upon thousands of objects and actions, images, and judgments, syntheses and conclusions which at some past time occupied the focal point of our attention and whose traces have not been discovered by physiology. Nevertheless, the memory keeps them in her mysterious stacks, makes us recognize them as lived experiences, enables us to distinguish them from others, and, above all, presents them to us either spontaneously or when our will makes the demand.

Methods of Improving the Memory

- 1) Calm, clear concentration.
- 2) Serious elaboration: associations, classification.
- 3) Use of several senses: sight, hearing, movement.
- 4) Predominant sense: eye-minded, ear-minded.
- 5) Repetition, without boredom and before oblivion.
- 6) Recitation: When? How?

1) Whatever we receive with perfect concentration becomes more deeply engraved and is consequently

best remembered. The more we improve our way of receiving ideas, the more tenacious will be our retention. For that reason, the greater our interest in something, the greater the impression produced, and, in turn, the more deeply will it be recorded. Why? Because the attention which accompanies the conscious activity is more perfect. It is difficult to record well what we have studied with boredom, or discouragement, or in the midst of distractions, or with parasitic thoughts. We can hardly recall something that remained on the fringe of attention and scarcely occupied the focus, or, for that matter, to recall what did enter the focal point but was there for such a brief time that the necessary clarity and differentiation were not recorded.

It would, again by way of analogy, be almost impossible to find in a library a new book which a librarian placed with uncertainty, while distracted or while nodding with sleep. The same is true of the ideas in our distracted minds. They will be as perfectly recorded as the degree of perfection of our concentration.

To pay attention half-heartedly is also to record half-heartedly. The mind may be likened to a camera. It cannot be focused on two separated things at the same time. If you are concentrating on your reading, and someone tells you a phone number to be called within an hour, you will not retain that phone number in your memory unless you give up your reading and focus on this item. So, also, if you are revolving in your mind your desires, fears, or problems while

attending a lecture or in conversation, you will not remember what you have heard. But if, when you are given that phone number, you write it down, or you think a moment about it and associate it with something known, the probability of your remembering it will be greater. The reason is that, in addition to your concentrated attention, you have given some active thought to the matter; you have had elaborating attention.

2. *What has been elaborated is better remembered.* Suppose a librarian received a number of new books, on the backbone of which no title appeared. Since the backbone is the part of the book the researcher sees in going among the files, a title would have to be typed and pasted there by the librarian before placing books on the shelves. Given a lazy librarian, we can imagine the difficulties readers would encounter in trying to locate these new titles.

Applying this now to the subject of memory, when new ideas enter our mind without our relating or labeling them, we shall not easily reproduce them at will. But if we discover meaningful associations between the new matter we read, for example, and what we previously knew; if we relate new knowledge to the old in order to clarify, confirm, or change our previous knowledge; if what we learned is related consciously to cause or effect, to part or whole—in brief, if we make any of the associations discussed in the preceeding chapter, the new knowledge will be linked to earlier knowledge by so many unbreakable

ties that, of necessity, we shall preserve and recall the new idea in splendid clarity and fullness.

Rightly did William James say: «Of two men with the same outward experiences and the same amount of mere native tenacity, the one who thinks over his experiences and weaves them into systematic relations with each other will be the one with the best memory.»¹

The most obvious systematic relation (and most helpful to memory) is classification, grouping together things that are alike. For instance, if you want to remember twenty items which you are going to buy at the grocery store, you may, of course, write them down. If, however, you want to strengthen your memory, classify these twenty items according to your usual household requirements. The articles for your meals you might divide in this way: 2 beverages; 3 dairy products (milk, cheese, butter); 3 vegetables; 2 meat items. Classify the remaining ten articles in a similar way. The law of similarity in origin or use will help you to recall them. In the same way, it will help to discover likeness in the sound of some words as: play, gray, day, or in their meaning as: childish, infantile, etc. The law of contrast, on the other hand, will bring to the mind opposite ideas, like giant and dwarf, saved and damned, light and darkness, etc. 3. Whatever has entered into consciousness through several sensorial ways will be better remembered. If we not only hear, but also see something; if we both write and speak it; if we both taste and touch

¹ *Principles of Psychology*, Henry Holt and Co., Vol. I, p. 662.

it; if we write it and speak about it; if we taste it and touch it; if we take an active part in it, then it is more deeply recorded in our memory. This is the pedagogical foundation for audio-visual aids in teaching. Whatever penetrates our consciousness through various senses does so under a greater number of aspects, and consequently is clearer, more distinct and is held in our memory by a greater number of ties. Hence the value of classroom films to increase our understanding and remembrance. Experiments carried out in several colleges and universities show that one learns at least four times as fast through the use of films. The only objection lies in the speed with which scenes follow each other, because this prevents peaceful analysis. However, this defect can be remedied by stopping or repeating the projection in order to study and discuss important points, or by combining the movie with slides—a method that would be ideal for teaching. If the efforts of Hollywood producers were directed to making learning easier instead of embellishing vice or exalting pleasure, humanity would be able through such films to make undreamed-of progress.

The extraordinary pedagogical success attained by the famous Father Manjon, in his Ave Maria Schools for the truant or abandoned children of Granada, is the result of this method. The children learn by hearing, seeing, and playing. For example, to help in the understanding of geography, Father Manjon made with cement a large relief map of Spain and placed it in the courtyard. On this map the professor goes

on short trips to the surrounding mountains or the nearest cities or provinces; he also travels down the river to the sea, naming what he finds on the way. On another day a pupil will make a trip by sea, going from one port to another according to the direction of the professor. History is acted out as a play, each child representing a historical character. The pupils enjoy the class and soon master the course.

4. *Whatever enters our consciousness by the predominant sense will be most easily recalled.*

Memory	{	Visual, photographic: recalls where and what was seen.
		Auditory: recalls what was heard.

Visual Memory (Eye-Minded Person)

Many people have predominantly visual memory. As they think or recall, they may be said to see what they are thinking. These persons will better remember what they have read, or what they have associated with something already seen. They recall not only the page where they read something, but also the exact location it occupied on that page. Such individuals should always use the same books or notes and should try to visualize and locate in their proper place what they want to recall. Here lies the foundation of mnemotechny (memorizing techniques).

For instance, I have in my mind some twenty to fifty or more places very familiar to me, and in a

definite order, e. g., 1) my garden, 2) the door, 3) the living room, 4) the dining room, 5) the kitchen, 6) the stairs, 7) the bedroom, etc. On these locations I place or project the objects or images I want to remember. For example. I am asked to remember the following in the same given order: 1) dog, 2) umbrella, 3) chair, 4) hen, 5) water, etc. When I hear the word «dog,» I place it mentally in the garden, the umbrella near the door, the chair in the living room, the hen, well cooked, on the dinner table, and the water in the kitchen. Now, when I go over those places again in my mind, I shall easily remember also the objects placed, and in their right order. There was the young lady, for example, who wanted to remember something important in the morning. The night before, she mentally placed it on the dresser at which she would be occupied in the morning. Another lady, instead of writing down what she had to buy on her shopping trip, mentally pictured those items in the order in which she had to find them in the supermarket and in the other shops she was going to visit. The methods were highly and regularly successful.

Auditory Memory (Ear-Minded Person)

On the other hand, there are those who best remember only what they have heard or said. The famous Father Maldonado of the University of Paris was of this type. He could not recall anything he read if he had not pronounced it. Since this type of memory

seems to be helped by muscular movements, such individuals should read aloud, or at least move their lips while reading. There are many who must move their lips while reading; in all probability their memory is predominantly auditory. Dr. Edmund Jacobson's experiments in Chicago, which we shall later discuss, throw some light on this matter.

Use and foster your predominant memory, but, to be more efficient, do not neglect the other one. Try to improve it, too.

Do you find it difficult to recall names? It may be that, when introduced to someone, you did not hear his name distinctly. You could not spell it. Don't be afraid to ask that the name be repeated. If your memory is predominately visual, writing the name will help. Try also to repeat it after the introduction: «Happy to meet you, Mr. Graham.» It helps if you can associate with the person a meaning in his name (Mr. Brown, Mrs. Cole), or you may be able to find a relation or connection with people having the same or similar names.

5. Whatever is better repeated is better retained. For immediate memory, such as we use when we take dictation or answer questions, repetition is not necessary if the series is short. An adult can remember six or seven nonsense syllables without repetition: the more alert, even eight or nine.² Children can retain only two or three.

In meaningful paragraphs, we may repeat 24 and even 36 syllables with only one reading. Immediate

² Fröbes, *Tratado de psicología empírica y experimental*, I, p. 546.

memory develops gradually in children and attains its maximum capacity at age 25.

For long-range memory, the need of repetition is a universal experience. We all repeat insistently what we want to retain. We look again and again at a landscape, a picture, a detail which we want to keep in our memory. A Spanish proverb expresses it: «Repetition is the chisel of memory.» With repetition, according to Woodworth, efficiency is best at the outset. Then this decreases slowly until a physiological limit is attained. The reason for this diminution may be that in our first readings, through the law of minimum effort, we retain what is easier and interesting and we leave what is more difficult for later readings. After familiarizing himself with the matter through the first reading, a good student re-reads the matter to find its implications and connections. Then he repeats, recites it, and reinforces the weak points.

According to Poppelreuter, what has remained in the consciousness through the first repetition acquires renewed clarity with succeeding repetitions.

What is more familiar is more easily recorded in our memory. A paragraph of a foreign language is not so easily retained as a similar one in our own language. The less a word is familiar to us in our reading, the longer we need to read it. The concrete is recalled better than the abstract, the visible better than the invisible, and so on, down to what is most difficult of recollection: the nonsense syllable.

If a person learns 100 nonsense syllables, according to the experiments of Ebbinghaus, he will forget

42 of them in 20 minutes, if he does not review them, 56 in an hour, 66 in a day, and 78 in a month. Evidently, forgetfulness is rapid at the beginning and slows down later. If, however, we repeat the 100 syllables (or any other information) shortly after learning them, or before an hour expires, then later during the day, then periodically, we shall have the satisfaction of retaining most of them for a long time.

From this there follows: *a)* the practical utility of the recapitulation at the end of a speech recommended by the classicists to the orator; *b)* the usefulness of repeating or recapitulating the matter ourselves, when the lecturer has failed to do so. This can be done either in a discussion with someone else who was present, or as an explanation to someone who was not there; *c)* the benefit of practicing summarizing in our own reading or study. For example, if you have an hour at your disposal, spend the first two or three minutes looking at the title, the subtitle, and the table of contents. Then do your reading, but reserve the last five minutes to recapitulate the ideas for yourself; *d)* the necessity of recapitulating more frequently, even every fifteen minutes, in speaking to children or uneducated persons; *e)* the utility of repeating a word, phrase, or paragraph as often as 15 or 30 times in studying a foreign language. Such learning by rote is the advice given by specialists in languages.

Cautions and Suggestions

If too many successive repetitions are made, there is danger of boredom and resulting inefficiency. On the other hand, if we review after everything has been forgotten, it is, for all practical purposes, learning the matter anew.

Repetitions ought to be spaced. Ebbinghaus discovered that if, for example, you need 29 repetitions to master a subject in one day, you will need only 19 reviews if you space them over three days. Whenever you have read or heard anything you want to retain, try to review it before 20 minutes have elapsed. Be satisfied with a fair knowledge, and do not endeavour to master the whole matter in only one day. Then review it the following two or three days; allow your subconscious to work on it during the night. You will marvel at the results.

For learning foreign languages and for mechanical memory work, the best time is that which immediately precedes sleep. If an hour a day is to be devoted not so much to new study as to review of material already studied, it will be more profitable to divide the period into two separate half hours. A word of caution here: in the interval do not attempt to study something of a similar nature. The result will be still better if one of these half hours immediately precedes sleep, for there will be no interference which makes retention more difficult. The time immediately following sleep will be especially favo-

rable if we enjoyed sound slumber shortly after retiring, and if we awakened thoroughly relaxed and clear-minded.

Repeating the material aloud in an even rhythm, neither too slowly nor too quickly, listening to it on a tape recorder, and pronouncing it at the same time—all this helps quick memorization.

6. *What has been recited is better remembered.* If, after reading an article, a chapter, or a paragraph, you recite it to test your memory, you will find increased results. Many students, given an hour to learn an assignment, will spend the entire period reading, re-reading and re-reading, with no time allowed for reciting. These students would enjoy better results if they had given only 30 to 40 per cent of the time to their readings, allowing 60 to 70 per cent to reciting. This is the very conclusion derived from the experiments of Arthur I. Gates with eighth-grade children and explained in his «Recitation as a Factor of Memorizing.»

Whole or parts? Dividing or grouping? When learning through repetition or recitation, should we attack the whole task at once or divide it into parts? Since discouragement must be avoided, and it is impossible to master at once an excessive amount of knowledge, we should first get a fair understanding of the whole subject. Then, if it is too long, attack the parts one by one while relating each one with the next and with the whole. When the assignment is short, it should always be taken as a whole. Even if it is long, but not excessively so, at least for literature selections, it has

been proved that to read and memorize the whole gives greater efficiency than to divide it into small parts.

A number with many digits, as 385492123 is better learned if it is presented in three groups: 385, 492, 123. If you were to read and learn a very long Basque name as Iturriberrigorrigoicoerrotacoechea, it would be simpler to divide the syllables into their meaningful parts: *iturri*, fountain; *berri*, new; *gorri*, red; *goico*, upper; *errotaco*, mill; *echea*, house; that is to say, «the house of the mill of the upper new red fountain.»

7) Learning while sleeping. The following experiment repeated over and over is enlightening: a poem is given to ten students to be learned «by heart.» Before going to bed they hear the poem and its explanation. During sleep, five of them are exposed to hearing it without awakening. On the following day the ten are given time to memorize the poem; those who heard it during their sleep will learn it more quickly than the others.

The technique consists in placing, under the student's pillow, a small earphone connected to a tape-recorder to which the lesson has been dictated. The professor can connect as many earphones as he wishes. It is a simple matter for him to adjust the volume so that each student, without being awakened, can subconsciously hear the lesson being transmitted.

«This is a wonderful way to make use of the time wasted in sleeping,» someone may say. But is it not detrimental to our rest and nervous system? When I

raised this very question a few years ago at Georgetown University, I was told by the Language Department that greater experimentation would be needed to reconcile the advantages of learning while sleeping with those of sound sleep. If such experiments do show that no fatigue, no restless sleep, and no harm to the nervous system result, then this will provide a wonderful opportunity to improve our mechanical memory, particularly in the field of language.

The widespread use of the dormiphone is seemingly giving some such assurance. From the time we go to bed, this apparatus, either a phonograph or a tape recorder, begins to repeat the selection we wish to memorize. We set the control clock at the time we want the repetition to cease, which will ordinarily be after an hour or an hour and a half; the clock is also set for the time at which we wish the recording to resume in the morning, usually about an hour and a half before we are to rise. The hours in between are left for sound sleep, and this would appear to be a procedure which involves no danger. In this way it seems that there is no danger to health. Some people have told me, however, that at first, and for a few days, they felt annoyance, or weariness, or difficulty in sleeping until they adapted themselves to this subconscious activity. The time for deep sleep is not the same for all. Some have superficial sleep in the beginning of the night, being awakened by noises, and then fall deeply asleep after two or three hours. These people, then, should not use the dormiphone in the morning.

Is Our Retentive Capacity Limited?

Many psychologists affirm that it is possible to develop the retentive capacity almost indefinitely by means of exercise. Others, while recognizing that our retentive capacity can be cultivated effectively and that it has great possibilities for improvement, tend nevertheless to set limits to this capacity in *psychic units*.³ Just as a library is limited in its capacity by its stacks and available space and can accomodate new books only when old ones are placed elsewhere in a similar way, according to this second group of psychologists, an overburdened memory will have to forget some of its old lore in order to file away the new.

To give some probability to this hypothesis, the experience of old people is recalled. When they remember their youthful years in detail, they usually forget the recent past. However, this deficiency may be explained by physiological processes or lack of use. Anyhow, if this limitation does exist, the fact that it is in «psychic units» should be a consolation and a lesson to us. Accordingly, if your retentive capacity is limited, instead of filling it with unimportant names or details, you should try in your reading

³ A psychic unit is that which enters into the memory, forming one single whole. It can be an unrelated name or fact, or it can be a very rich synthesis which embraces in the unity many ideas closely linked together.

and studies to make résumés, outlines, and well-developed syntheses of important knowledge. Furthermore, since the field of learning is so vast today, try as soon as possible to determine your specialty and to dedicate time and effort in that direction.

RESUME

Motivation

- Choose what you want to retain, what is interesting.
- What interests you will attract full attention and will easily be recorded.
- Be confident about the possibilities of your memory.
- Add voluntary attention through personal motivation and will.

Methods

1. Receive the material into your consciousness by deep, peaceful concentration.
2. Use several senses: visualize, hear, pronounce it.
3. Use especially your predominant memory.
4. Understand it better by meaningful association.
5. Organize and classify your thoughts.
6. Put together things alike; see the contrast.
7. Reinforce your memory by repetition and recitation.
8. Review at the end of each assignment or after an hour.
9. Space reviews over two or three days.
10. Read and repeat the piece as a whole.
11. If too long, understand first the whole and divide it into parts; then attack each part and relate one to the other.
12. Sleep over it.

Memory In Prayer

It is convenient to preserve the spiritual treasures received in meditation, those lights and inspirations that allowed us to see transcendent or religious truths with greater clarity, and the motives that moved our will.

The more profound our attention has been during meditation, the more personal the development of the considerations and motives, and the greater the affections we have felt so much, the more deeply will these considerations and motives remain fixed in our memory.

Accordingly, St. Ignatius of Loyola advises that the points chosen for meditation should not be too fully developed; rather each individual should be given the opportunity of discovering new considerations, applications, or motives by his own reasoning, aided by grace. Whatever we discover in this way moves us more profoundly and remains more deeply fixed in our minds. Here, also, the main element in retaining these lights is the grace of God which will be given to us if we ask for it with humility.

Repetition is also necessary. In the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius we are urged to repeat the most important meditations, and to reconsider at the end of each day the meditations we have made since morning. This may be done either by applying the five senses to what has already been considered, by recapit-

ulating what most impressed us, or by dwelling on those thoughts which previously did not appeal to us.

A valuable help to this is found in the examination of the meditation which is intended not only to help us correct our defects, but also to give an opportunity both to thank God for the lights received and to preserve them by means of short annotations.



II

Affective Life

CHAPTER 1

Feelings and Emotions

HUMAN LIFE WITHOUT its affective element, that is, without emotions, affections or feelings, would be sad, monotonous, and colorless. Mental or manual work without affectivity, that is, without interest or enthusiasm, would soon become boring and intolerably fatiguing. In mental work, interest has been considered as the sentimental aspect of attention.

Negative Feelings Make Mental Work Difficult

Exaggerated affections prevent true concentration on anything but the subject dreaded or desired, as we saw in connection with attention dominated by passions and fears. We might add that all negative

emotions, such as anger, resentment, sadness, discouragement and despair, will have the same result. They must be properly checked and the energy they produce directed toward work and study.

For example, a person, who desires to avenge the enslavement of his country, and toward this end determines to excel in knowledge, may receive strength and energy from his anger, Someone beset by despair, finding the way of science open to him, will be given a strong impulse to succeed, and by that very despair. A student's exaggerated fear of an examination perturbs and inhibits his memory; a moderate fear of failure, on the other hand, energizes his attention and his will.

The sympathetic nervous system, when activated, and the hormones, when freed by negative emotions, tend to produce nervous overexcitement, muscular contraction, and a slowing up of the nutritive processes. This hinders peaceful concentration. When sadness, worry, or anger dominate us, it is difficult to think of anything else and, above all, it is almost impossible to think calmly.

Controlled Affective Life Helps Mental Work

Affective life is the lever, the support and the motor force which communicates to mental work its greatest activity and efficiency. It is the foundation of its continuity and perseverance. This is achieved by 1) the interest which springs from feelings; 2) the enthusiasm which would correspond to emotions.

II

CHAPTER 2

Interest

Interest: How to arouse it	Sensorial, by	{ lights, colors, sounds, movement; variety, contrast.
	Intellectual, by	{ variety, contrast; clear brilliant image; simple and conclusive reasoning; rich and clear syntheses; solution of questions,
	Appetitive; Volitional	{ easy, agreeable. noble, useful, necessary.

Interest. An object interesting in itself is one which possesses some spontaneous attractiveness to the senses, the mind, the sensitive appetites, or the will.

The senses are attracted by lights and colors, sounds and movements. Interest increases in proportion to the variety, intensity, and contrast presented. This is the foundation of the psychology behind advertising.

The mind is also attracted by variety and contrast, by the clarity, the brilliance of the idea, by the simplicity and cogency of evidence in reasoning to the solution of puzzling questions, by the momentum of conclusions and syntheses.

Our sensitive appetites are moved by whatever is presented to them as agreeable or easy, and *the will* is inclined to what appears as good, suitable, honorable, useful, or necessary.

Interest is created or increased by our environment: family, friends, society; by our activities: our reading, our enterprises. We may produce interest in unattractive subjects if we relate them with what we like or if we are able to see their present or future utility. Anything is potentially interesting to anybody. * Lack of knowledge is the main cause of lack of interest. Therefore, learn something about a new subject, see its usefulness, and then it will become interesting to you.

The ability to draw this attractiveness from our work or study and the skill to arouse it in our listeners or pupils is the secret of working, studying, or teaching efficiently.

My early experience as a professor of languages taught me that a program cluttered with grammar rules aroused in students boredom and even repulsion for the course. The development of the course did not

appear easy or attractive to my students, and it was difficult for them to appreciate the program's utility at first. I discarded the grammar book, therefore, and substituted a few brief notes containing only the essential rules for pronunciation and translation. I helped the students see hundreds of cognates in the language they were studying. We used them in sentences. We translated very simple passages containing interesting anecdotes. Every day we had a few active minutes when I took different objects, named them (repeating the name several times), and performed some action with these objects while I explained in French what I was doing. Then, without speaking a word of his native language, the student was asked to touch the objects, separate or lift them, and tell me what he was doing. Wall charts, showing scenes of daily life, served the same purpose.

In a month's time the pupils were prepared to understand adventure slides narrated in French. When I repeated the slides and asked a student to explain them in French, I was pleasantly surprised with the result. Invariably they did it perfectly, in spite of the fact that a month before they had known nothing of the language.

My students' interest was aroused simply because they found personal usefulness in the course. They found variety; movement and they made use of several senses. The pleasure factor entered into play, increased by the interesting slides and, later, by the use of the phonograph and tape recorder. All this, added to the facility with which, unconsciously, they

were learning difficult items, made these youngsters so enthusiastic that they even took their French books to recreation. It is unnecessary to add that their final grades were excellent.

The success of the Manjon schools is due to their emphasis on arousing interest, on making the courses easy and agreeable.

The heroic German Sodalists who actively opposed Hitlerian materialism were trained by the famous Father Mariaux, S. J. His principal method was to propose a specific problem of current interest and invite the members of his Sodality to find practical solutions. He chose, for instance, doctrinal controversies on ethical problems, such as the danger of bad movies. Soon the members were eager to take the floor themselves. The result was that the subsequent explanation and solution by the director was received with greater interest.

A professor who begins his class by stressing the difficulty of the lesson will indeed arouse in some of his talented or conscientious students the desire to conquer difficulties and scale great heights, but in the majority he will instill a repugnance for the effort to be expended and a fear and discouragement at what seems too difficult to attain. Confidence is necessary for learning as for any other achievement. If a child is convinced he is stupid, he will be unable to learn. If you think you have a poor memory, you will not put it to work, and, consequently, you will remember very little. However, Thomas De Quincey

said: «The memory strengthens as you lay burdens upon it and becomes trustworthy as you trust it.»

In preparing a class or a speech, as much time should be given to finding means of arousing interest as that given to the understanding of the matter. This is the secret of great speakers and inspiring teachers. In addition to understanding the matter thoroughly and thus being able to explain it clearly, they try to find comparisons and illustrations to give light to the subject-matter, examples to confirm the teaching and to make it pleasurable, and syntheses which set in relief their main ideas. Any clerk, cashier, or laborer—any employee—who knows he will receive a percentage of the profits in addition to his salary works with increased earnestness, concentration, and efficiency, for he regards the business enterprise as his own. He has a personal interest in its success. When this postulate of sociology is put into practice, pleasure and efficiency in work will be increased, as well as profit for the business concern. An industrialist in Central America, whom I persuaded to experiment in profit-sharing, thanked me a few months later. «My workers,» he said, «are so pleased every time we distribute benefits that they urge one another to work more efficiently, to take better care of the tools, or machines, and to look for new customers. As a result, of course, my own profit has increased.»

II

CHAPTER 3

Enthusiasm

IF FEELINGS HAVE SO GREAT an influence in arousing and maintaining attention because of the interest they call forth, the same may be said even more forcefully of the emotions, since, according to many psychologists, emotions are only an intensification of feelings or sentiments.

Interest, which is such a help to mental work, is transformed into enthusiasm when it reaches the level of emotion, the whole organism being strongly involved. Then it produces a greater vitality and energy, a greater concentration of attention, a greater pleasure, a greater perseverance in effort.

It is proper to all emotions to limit the field of attention by cutting off any other thought in order to concentrate on the emotional focal point. When

someone is afraid of an impending evil, he can hardly think of anything else; the lover cannot avert his thoughts from the person he loves; on making a new discovery, the researcher feels such a thrill of joy and hope that his attention can hardly be drawn away.

When the adolescent, emerging from the egocentricity of childhood, discovers social, patriotic, or religious values, he sets himself an ideal outside of himself and greater than himself. He will then feel untold enthusiasm in the pursuit of his studies and, as a result, greater energy will help him attain this ideal. It is the beginning of a new life, the dawn of a great day. Everything seems feasible because of his ideal. It is emotion which has thus entered into play.

Ideal = Emotion = Enthusiasm

This trio is all one or, rather, its members constitute the ideological and physiological causes with their psychic effect. There is another corresponding trio:

Concentration = Efficiency = Joy

Menendez y Pelayo, the great Spanish literary critic and historian, appalled that the dark legend about Spanish Catholicism during the Golden Age was widespread in the field of history, conceived as his ideal the defense of his country and religion. He studied so hard that he surpassed his classmates in knowledge and in beauty of style. He astonished the world with his books, and experienced an intense, living joy as

he wrote his marvelous history of the *Heterodoxas Espanoles*.

Let Us choose Our Ideal!

* * Let us, then, set before ourselves a great objective for our whole lives, a goal toward which we can clearly and constantly aim. In pursuit of this great, clearly conceived ideal there will spontaneously develop an intense and enduring inclination—sensitive and, at the same time, spiritual—toward that goal which satisfies all our aspirations. The emotional machinery will be set in motion within us, and in the developing of extraordinary energy each of the following will take part: the hypothalamus in our middle brain, the sympathetic nervous system, and the pituitary and suprarenal gland with their wealth of hormones. That noble ideal will give unity, harmony, vigor, and a sense of fulfillment to our lives, increasing the physical and psychic perfection of our acts. Unity of thought and desire will put an end to parasitic ideas, will facilitate concentration, and will give to work and study the maximum pleasure and efficiency.

Working with but a single thought is not tiring; since it is agreeable, it also helps us rest. For this reason, an ideal which makes us think constantly of what we greatly desire is a source of peace and joy. That is the reason why, in a nervous breakdown, an effort is made to discover the patient's attractions or ideals in order to help him rest.

This ideal should not be utopian, but suited to our aptitudes and personality; nor should it be at odds with our Supreme God, the last end of man, for in this case there will be a lack of unity which in the long run will be an evil. The ideal should also be practical of attainment at every moment; in a word, it should help to make us live the present moment with unity and fullness. This gives true happiness. (For further development, see *Achieving Peace of Heart*, «How to Choose an Ideal.»)

Establish a Relationship between Our Ideal and Our Work

An undergraduate in Sao Paulo, Brazil, confided this problem to me. He had failed his Latin examination three times and hated the course. I asked him: «Have you any goal for your future life?»

«Yes,» he answered, «I should like to be an orator and a writer. I want to help free my country from those villains who govern it only for their own benefit.»

«That is a wonderful ideal,» I answered, «but don't you see that the best models of oratory and poetry are to be found in Latin literature? Besides, Portuguese is a Romance language, and you will never discover all its treasures unless you know the language from which it is derived—Latin.»

When he began to connect the light and splendor of his golden ideal with this dreaded study of Latin, he

not only became interested, but grew so enthusiastic about Latin that in the following examination he received a most respectable grade.

Every educator or speaker, once he knows what he is going to teach, should devote as much time as possible to find methods of arousing interest and enthusiasm in his listeners by appealing to their feelings and emotions. For our own part, once we have discovered our ideal and have made it concrete, we should summarize it in a few words, so that we can keep it constantly in mind. In this manner, we shall find new life, strength, pleasure, constancy, and efficiency.

SUMMARY

Influence of the Affective Life in Mental Work

Disordered affectivity is a hindrance.	{	Uncontrolled emotions inhibit, perturb, or retard us.
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1st level: *Interest*: the element of feeling in attention.

Interest helps to	{	avoid boredom. give color, flavor. give activity and constancy.
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Interest is aroused	{	in the senses by	{	lights, colors, sounds, movement, variety, contrast.
		in the intellect by	{	clear, brilliant ideas; simple, evident reasoning; conclusions, syntheses.
		in the appetites and will by that which is	{	agreeable, easy; useful, honorable, necessary.

2nd level: *Enthusiasm*: the emotional aspect of attention.

Emotions and enthusiasm increase	{	vitality and forcefulness; concentration; pleasure and perseverance.
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How to arouse it?	{	a great objective clearly before your eyes;
		a constant and forceful tendency toward it;
		an ideal adapted to your possi- bilities;
		an ideal to which your study is related.

Affections In Prayer

We can cherish and express varied sentiments and affections in prayer: adoration and respect flow from the knowledge of our nothingness before the Infinite Greatness: humility and contrition belong to the criminal facing the Supreme and Sovereign Judge; petition and trust of the needy before the Generous Benefactor; love of children for their most Loving Father; sorrow for our own offenses against God, the sins of the world, the suffering of Christ, the persecutions of His Church; joy because of His triumph, because of His divine perfections; fear of His justice; love of His goodness; hatred of sin; etc. Prayer without affection will soon become arid and difficult, and strong virtue and even heroism will be necessary to persevere.

God wants to make Himself felt by faithful souls. He is eager to communicate to them His light, peace and consolation. If, at times, God does not do so, it is purely because of our lack of preparation and generosity, or because He foresees vanity or pride ahead for us.

Nevertheless, in speaking of feelings in the spiritual life, two dangers should be avoided. The first danger is that of allowing ourselves to be governed by them, acting or refraining from action according to the feelings and emotions of the moment, considering them also so necessary that we measure our

virtue by them. Feelings are not absolutely necessary, and sanctity is possible without them. Neither are they beacons to guide us. However, they do give greater force to our actions; they give constancy in the way of prayer, and they make our prayer life easier and more pleasurable. Like the steam of the locomotive, our feelings must be controlled—by reason and faith.

The second danger is that of considering the feelings childish, despising them as feminine sensitivity, unworthy of a robust personality. To repress, suppress, or attempt to annihilate them would be to distort human nature and would tend to make spiritual life insipid and harsh. It would mean that the soul closes its doors to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and places obstacles in the way of the Lord who ordinarily makes use of man's affections and feelings to encourage, console, and strengthen His children.

For these reasons, in almost all the meditations of the *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius requires us to ask light for the intellect and feelings and strength for the will; he advises that we should make every effort to obtain these gifts, these aids to more fruitful meditation. These efforts can take the following forms:

1) In our meditations, let us discover contrasts, For example, in the Passion of Christ we see Omnipotence shackled, Infinite Wisdom mocked, Unlimited Innocence and Goodness condemned, scourged, etc. Consider the startling contrast between the munificence of God and our repeated ingratitude and sins.

2) Another method for arousing affections is to

make abstract ideas sensible by means of images and comparisons. Thus, in the meditations on sin, we should picture ourselves as traitors, convicted criminals standing before the Supreme Judge from whom we had received so many favors.

3) We should express externally by our bodily posture, by our words and tone of voice the interior sentiments which we have or wish to have. For if it is true that the soul has an influence on the body, it is no less certain that the latter influences the soul. Many times we feel dry, hard as we prepare for confession; on reciting an Act of Contrition, however, in a tone of genuine sorrow and in a humble posture, we soon feel the stirrings of that sorrow and contrition. Often we are unaware of Our Lord after Holy Communion, but if we say loving words to Him in a tone of affection, our hearts are soon aflame. The gift of Wisdom, which makes the soul enjoy the presence of God and plunges it delightfully into the abyss of His love, is, in a certain way, a spiritualization and a sublimation of sentiment.

Simple and Practical Method of Affective Prayer

If we meditate, for example, on Christ crucified, we should see Him before us, torn and bleeding. Thereupon we should prostrate ourselves reverently at the foot of His cross, asking Him, «Lord, were you suffering very much?» On hearing, mentally, His affirmative and detailed answer, we should strive for a

feeling of compassion, then enunciate that feeling to Him ten or twenty times.

«Lord, when You were suffering so much, did You think of me? Was I present to You?» After I learn that I was, indeed, on His mind and that He was paying the penalty for my sins, I shall allow myself to be overcome by a feeling of gratitude toward Jesus Christ, overcome, as well, by a hatred of sin. Reducing my feelings or affections to a few words, I shall repeat them many times, changing them slightly; then I shall, and with a specific act of the will, make a resolution which I shall put into execution that very day.

When the feeling begins to wane, I shall ask God another question: «Lord, what were You thinking about me? What did You expect of me?» If I am attentive, I shall hear, «Following my example, you would choose suffering and poverty, and in this way grow rich for heaven.» Affections should be repeated and resolutions formulated.

In this fashion it is easy to persevere a half hour or an hour in meditation, and our prayer will be fruitful and consoling without distraction or mental fatigue.

St. Ignatius advises us to pause and not hurry over any point or consideration from which we derive light, consolation or profit. It is important that we stop at such a point and do not hurry on to something else. He reminds us that it is not knowledge which fills our souls to capacity so much as the deep, interior enjoyment of things spiritual.

When an eminent priest introduced the author at a lecture held at the University of Illinois, he publicly recounted that this simple method (which he found described in *Achieving Peace of Heart*) was the one which made him advance most in prayer and had brought him the greatest joy and profit.

III

Volitional Life

CHAPTER 1

Motivation and Decision

THE WILL IS THE «QUEEN» of our faculties. If it is presented with something good and desirable and wants to take sides, nothing is impossible.

In mental work the will can command attention and at least for a few moments will be obeyed; when the command is repeated, attention will again follow. The will can command interior recollection for a few minutes and put aside the occasions of distraction. The will can remove the vices that obsess us; it can adapt the ideal to the very zenith of our capacities.

If the will decides it, we shall reflect on what we read and hear, associate the new facts with those already known. At the dictation of the will, we shall repeat all this until it is fixed in our minds; we shall, at its direction, take notes, make summaries and outlines.

If the will determines that our study shall be more efficient, we shall find the interest in whatever we undertake by realizing its utility, its necessity, and its relationship to our ideal. Often it will suffice to start delving into a subject and soon, after we know something about it, we shall become interested.

One of the greatest of mathematicians failed in his first arithmetic and geometry examinations. Instead of losing heart, he specified for himself the ideal of excelling in mathematics. His iron will succeeded, and he conquered all difficulties to the astonishment of his professors and, later, of the world.

As Lacordaire says, «*I will* is the rarest expression in the world, though it is the most frequently used.» Given sufficient natural endowment, the man or woman who discovers the sublime secret of really *willing* to know, even if he occupies the lowest place at the outset, will soon overtake the others.

How to Attain an Efficacious «I Will.»

1. Make concrete what you are going to decide. The will in its nobility does not rush headlong into the unknown; it is not set in motion unless the intellect clearly perceives the way beforehand and is convinced that it is possible.
2. Feel that possibility. This queen of our psyche does not knowingly expose herself to failure. The decision to perform a certain act will not be made unless there is a concomitant conviction of the possibility of

success, much as an athlete who feels the muscular power he needs for an exercise. Unless this conviction is present, the will expresses itself in an «I would like,» not in the decisive «I will.»

3. Find a motive for willing. The will is a faculty naturally inclined to good. If our intellect presents our study or our work to the will as good, useful, suitable and necessary, then will follow the desire and decision of the will to make it a reality.

4. Will truly. When we truly make our decision, we feel that what we wanted is already a reality, not actually here and now, but in the future. We are convinced that the object of our volitional act is going to be realized. What formerly was only a plan, now has an assured existence.

A wealthy student, for example, will not make much progress in his studies if he does not will to apply himself. Because he feels he has assured security in his parents' wealth, he faces the temptation to lose himself in various forms of self-gratification. In a sense, this young man or woman must strive even harder for worthwhile motivation and self-control.

We shall not repeat here what we wrote in *Achieving Peace of Heart*, concerning the re-education of the will and the overcoming of indecision and inconstancy. We shall be content here with explaining the practical application of the volitional act of deciding to study and to concentrate on a lecture, meditation or prayer.

Application to Mental Work

1. Make the act concrete. Imagine yourself paying attention for half an hour to a speaker or a book. If distractions occur, see yourself bringing your attention back once more.
 2. The possibility acknowledged and felt. See and be convinced that the action you have imagined can be performed for a given time—a half hour or an hour.
 3. Motives. Imagine that you do it to fulfill your duty, to strengthen your character, to improve your concentration, to succeed in your undertaking, to please your parents and professors, or simply to enjoy the pleasure of knowledge, etc.
 4. Sincere decision. Say: «I will pay attention to my assignment assiduously for a definite period; if I am distracted involuntarily, I will concentrate once again.» By my precise decision I make it impossible for me to neglect study and to welcome distractions.
- The method outlined above, seriously undertaken, invariably achieves results. It will work for you, too, and admirably.

Application to Prayer

Our union with God and our transformation in Him is realized not only by the intellect which knows Him, but, above all, by the will which loves Him and wishes to please Him. Hence, it is not enough to recall

eternal truths during prayer, to reflect upon them and draw conclusions from them; neither should we be satisfied with sentimentality and sterile desires. We must make the will exert itself; we must see that, having made deliberate decisions, the will proceeds to execute them. For this it is necessary:

1. *To make our resolutions concrete*, foreseeing where, when, and how they are to be carried out in spite of instinctive repugnance or external obstacles.

2. *To realize that our resolutions are possible* when aided by that grace which we shall certainly obtain if we request it with constancy and humility. For this purpose we should begin by focusing on what is simplest. For example: I seek to recite the Psalms, the Rosary, the Litanies, etc., without distractions. If, before beginning, I content myself with merely «I will not be distracted during the entire time,» then I shall hardly feel the possibility of attaining this goal, and my will produces only an inefficacious desire. But if I make the act of the will concrete and easy, if, for instance, I make this determination—«In the 'Kyries' I will feel humility,» or «In the first 'Our Father' I will feel confidence»—then I shall experience the possibility of this resolve and the volitional act will be true and, consequently, efficacious.

3. *To give our resolutions a motivation* in order that they will be desired with greater constancy and firmness. We may secure such motivation, for instance, by considering how appropriate these resolves are for a man endowed with reason, how much more appropriate they are for a Christian who professes to fol-

low Christ, or how very incumbent they are on one called to higher perfection. Again, motivation will follow if we ponder on their usefulness in achieving peace and satisfaction in this life and eternal glory and happiness in the next. Still further, we shall obtain and strengthen our motivation by realizing how easy and agreeable are the executions of those resolutions when given the help of divine grace, by realizing the consolations we shall derive after the initial repugnance has been overcome.

Lastly, motivation is certain to follow if we really ponder the necessity of such a resolution for our eventual salvation and sanctification or, negatively, if we ponder the great evils that will befall us if we do not carry out our resolves.

The will is, by nature, a faculty inclined to good; if a clear, precise, concrete course of action is presented to it with attendant motivation, then the will is almost bound to accept the course outlined by our resolutions.

4. But since the will is free and sometimes «lazy,» *the will must be consciously activated*, and we must never be satisfied with a spontaneous impulse or with merely planning a decision. We must reach out to the efficacious act of the will, to a deliberate decision when we know that we sincerely want that goal, when we know that the resolution already has a certain future.

We may also rehearse our good resolution. For instance, we want to act properly and decently with someone whom we find naturally repugnant to us. We

rehearse our resolution by concentrating on his redeeming qualities, by finding excuses for his defects. We speak, in imagination, to others about his virtues and speak kindly of him. When we meet him, in imagination, we smile at him, recall motives for loving him, ask God's blessings for him, and we even render services to him and make sacrifices for him. This way of mentally living a difficult decision will facilitate its eventual execution. «True sanctity consists in being, as far as our will is concerned, thoroughly in accordance with the most holy will of God,» wrote St. John of the Cross.

PRACTICAL RESUME

Perfect Decision in Prayer

1. Make your decision concrete: «What shall I do? When? How?»
2. Feel its possibility through your will power and God's grace.
3. Have a motive which appeals to your reason and to your emotions.
4. Do not be satisfied with a spontaneous desire or with only a planning which does not launch a «lazy» will into action.
5. Step forward (all mental discussion is over) and, by a truly decisive «I will,» launch yourself toward the imagined ideal or virtue.
6. Ask God to keep and strengthen your good will and to give His necessary help for any supernatural act.

IV

Application

CHAPTER 1

Key to Success

FROM THE FOREGOING KNOWLEDGE acquired from the study of our three psychic activities—particularly from our understanding of the will—let us draw practical conclusions now in order to plan our lives and enterprises and to achieve true efficiency and success.

Success may be defined as the progressive realization of an ideal, or the attainment of a proposed worthy goal.

* *

Our ideals, though important, may be accidental, temporal and limited: to become financially independent, or to raise a happy family, to be learned, etc. On the other hand, our ideals may be transcendent, essential, everlasting: to be eternally happy in heaven. By the same token, our success—the achievement

of our goal—may be limited to a temporal enterprise, producing only temporal satisfaction, or it may be extended to that total, eternal and transcendent goal, forever satisfying every noble craving.

A. Success in Our Temporal Goals

Let us first direct our activities toward the progressive realization of our temporal, worthy ideals. The same rules will help us achieve our eternal and transcendent goal. A few examples will help to direct us.

Why did Father Flanagan succeed with his Boys Town? He understood clearly the tremendous force of responsible young men and the concrete possibility of a self-governing and prosperous community of well-trained boys. Thereupon he conceived the ideal of restoring wayward boys to a respected place in society by giving them a concrete goal to realize, by fostering their sense of responsibility, and by encouraging their efforts through the confidence he showed in them.

From the day he conceived his ideal, Father Flanagan set to work with a few boys and very limited facilities. He kept his ideal constantly in his mind, in his heart, and in all his actions, despite obstacles, despite predictions and prospects of failure. He never allowed his work to be halted by discouragement, and Boys Town is today a standing monument to a man who never lost sight of his goal.

This, then, must be the first step toward efficiency and success in our enterprises.

1. Have a goal clearly in mind. See clearly the ideal and the means to attain it. The more concretely the mind proposes that goal to the will, the greater the facility and inclination of the will to want it. The old philosophical truism has it that «nothing is wanted unless it is first known.» Concentrate your attention and maintain that concentration on your goal in spite of contrary events. Father Flanagan imagined himself in the dreamed-of situation, and so he eventually became what he thought about.

The power of thought has unlimited horizons. Within feasibility, of course, everything is possible to the will of man if he *conceives* it as a possible goal, if he keeps it clearly in mind and, if he has the time to accomplish it.

Earl Nightingale compares the mind to a farmer and his land. If the farmer sows grain, he will reap grain; if he sows brambles, then brambles will be his crop. The same happens with our minds: if we keep a goal constantly in mind, then we shall realize that goal, and so attain success. If we keep in mind that we will be learned, we shall be learned. If a life of virtue is our goal, and we keep it ever before the mind, then we shall lead a holy life. If the mind continually dwells on doubts and thoughts of failure, then we shall surely fail.

2. Think of the ideal as possible. Otherwise the will elicits a mere desire, not a working decision. «*Posunt quia posse videntur*» is a wise Roman slogan:

«They can, because they think they can.» Lives and success are not shaped by circumstances, as many think, but by a strong will and a conviction regarding the sublimity and feasibility of its goal. Such a will looks for favorable conditions; if it does not find them, it makes them.

The reader hopefully will pardon a bit of family, yet pertinent, history here.

As a boy in the industrial centre of Bilbao in Spain, I was intimately familiar with my father's dream to build a healthful and attractive residential section for workers and middle-class families of the town. In addition to his ideal, Don Juan Jose, as he was known, had only the property; he lacked the necessary capital. Furthermore, the banks were unwilling to advance the credit of one million dollars. Though the prospects were very dismal, yet, instead of abandoning his goal, my father began to think of other means of securing financial backing. He thought to himself: «What if the King of Spain would favor my plan and become my partner in this enterprise?» Don Juan Jose had never even been to the capital of Spain, and certainly he knew no one at Court. And so he consulted a friend.

«Do you think it impossible for me to secure the moral support of the King in my project?»

«Impossible? No!» his friend remarked, «but difficult perhaps.»

«If I obtain such support, will this help me to secure financial backing for my project?»

«Certainly,» his friend assured him.

«Then if this is not impossible and it will help me realize my objective, I shall certainly achieve it and seek an audience at once.» And off he went to Madrid to seek an audience with His Majesty. After one month he obtained it.

So enthusiastic was King Alphonso that, in addition to the credit extended by the bank, both he and his Prime Minister joined my father in his project as first shareholders. Today in Bilbao there is a very attractive and healthful residential section inhabited by five thousand happy people, a tribute to the unwavering determination of one man to achieve an ideal which he saw to be both good and possible.

3. Associate your chosen goal with other objectives dear to you. Your chosen ideal may be associated with the happiness of those closest to you, with the safety and welfare of your country, or with goals related to your own good, whether temporal or eternal. Like a rolling snowball, your ideal will grow and grow in proportion to the number of other goals with which you associate it. So, Father Flanagan, for example, had an ideal which became all-consuming when his dream of making wayward boys useful members of society was incorporated in the objective of bringing souls to eternal happiness.

4. Bring your goal before the will, clothed in the warmth of feelings and emotions. A cold or merely speculative ideal will not force the human will to action. A man without feelings is capable of little or no worthwhile activity. At the other extreme, feel-

ing, abandoned to itself, will be a perpetual source of extravagance and corruption, a rudderless boat.

The firmness of the will demands two conditions or, perhaps, is the result of two causes : a) idea ; b) sentiment.

a) A clear, concrete, fixed, vivid, driving idea that absorbs and occupies the mind completely. This idea is like a lighthouse pointing out to the will the direction or the goal.

b) A strong, vitalizing, powerful feeling which will take firm possession of the heart, but which will be absolutely subordinated to the idea. It is this feeling which gives impulse and drive to the will.

* An idea without the support of our emotional life means only a lazy will. On the other hand, a feeling without the support of the idea will produce an inconstant will.

Keep that clear and warm idea constantly in mind. Write it down on a card and look at it every morning. Your new day will have tremendous meaning and purpose for you, and you will arise to meet it with zest and joy. Success is not due to sporadic attempts to realize a goal ; success is, rather, progressive, continuing realization. Never allow your ideal to fade ; keep your attention away from those petty goals which may distract you from your ideal.

5. Sincerely want your ideal. Do not feel satisfied with spontaneous desires, with mere wishings. Do not aim at vague, indefinite goals. Never act only through impulse, for this will not last. Make a real and deliberate decision, and in this way you will

never turn back until you have achieved your goal. That determination to think constantly of your ideal will allow no opposing or distracting aims to occupy your mind. With such a sincere decision, start acting immediately, and that action, in turn, will be the best proof of the sincerity of your will.

B. Efficiency in Achieving Our Everlasting Goal

To be successful in business, in a career, in any other enterprise related to this life, no matter how important it is, means only the achievement of a limited success which must be subordinated to the really important—the eternal ideal. This essential and all-embracing success is the progressive realization of our moral perfection and, through it, the attainment of total and eternal happiness in heaven. However, in order for us to obtain this, God may have envisaged a failure in our temporal goal. This must not be considered a real failure, nor should it produce discouragement since it leads to greater achievement. Countless Christians, we dare say, throughout the world and over the ages have attained success, at least in its essential note: the salvation of their souls. A large proportion of religious men and women as well as fervent lay people realize it in a more perfect way through their dedicated lives. Any one of the saints, therefore, could be our model in achieving this total success and could teach us how to organize our acti-

vities in order to attain sanctity. I shall choose Captain Ignatius of Loyola because he is more familiar to me and because he left us in his *Spiritual Exercises* a very clear, reasonable and psychically efficient pattern by which to organize our lives toward perfection and salvation.

As a soldier, Loyola's ideal of becoming an efficient captain in the service of his king led him to heroic actions, military honors and promotions. But when he grasped the superhuman greatness of serving God, the Eternal King, through a life of sanctity, he tried to understand this new ideal more clearly by many hours of concentrated reading and meditation. He realized that the effects of achieving this supreme goal would be actual joy and peace to himself, a greater glorification of God, the salvation of countless souls, and his own future eternal happiness. He warmed his ideal in the love of Christ and summed it up in a motto ever-present in his mind: «Everything for the greater glory of God.» Loyola's life overflowed with peace and divine consolation and was one of the most efficacious lives in modern times. As a matter of fact, historians agree that he gave a new direction and impulse to religious life in Europe.

Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* is a thirty-day training for efficacious, fruitful living in time and in eternity. First we have to see clearly the goal of our lives: the service of God and salvation of our souls. We meditate positively on its importance, reinforcing our convictions by dwelling on the tremendous consequences of a life of sin, the eternal loss of God. Now we con-

template that ideal, ideally lived by God Himself who becomes man in order to be our most loving Model, Friend and Redeemer. In his meditations on the life of Our Lord, St. Ignatius helps us warm our ideal with intense love of Christ. Our goal is made more concrete and feasible in the meditation preparatory for «election»; our wills are strengthened by our concentration on the heroic example of Christ in His Passion and on the final glorification of His resurrection.

In order that the mind and heart may better grasp this ideal, the *Spiritual Exercises* should be practiced in a secluded place toward better concentration, internal recollection, and the removal of distractions. The program of St. Ignatius (which may be followed over periods of three, eight, or thirty days) has been, for many modern saints and fervent Christians, the most powerful means of helping them secure their supreme goal. These exercises have given them the initial impulse and helped them to hold fast in the pursuit of their transcendent ideal.

William James regarded, as the most significant truth of our time, that we can alter our lives by altering our attitude of mind. «We need only act simply as if we are succeeding, as if what we want to attain is real, and it will become real.» In all probability, William James was not fully aware of the Ignatian method, nor of the teaching of saints on Catholic asceticism, wherein virtually the same advice has been urged for centuries. But we can take this wisdom from

James and apply it to the spiritual life. It would amount to this: have a clear idea of sanctity; realize its possibility through the grace of God; keep that ideal in your mind and before your will through your daily meditation. In this way saints are made.

IV

CHAPTER 2

Anatomy of Failure

CONSIDER THIS STARTLING SITUATION: 100 young men, 24 years of age, have the qualifications, they dream and plan for success in business; at age 64, very few will have achieved the wealth of which they dreamed; another few will have achieved financial independence; a larger number will continue to work; but the majority will have to be supported. This is the estimate at which Earl Nightingale has arrived.

Again, of every 100 couples who dream of happiness in marriage, 15 will suffer total failure or divorce, conservatively speaking; a larger percentage of this group will not enjoy the marital happiness they have envisioned.

Why do so many people fail? Why are so few goals fully attained by those who have both the ability and the opportunities?

1) *Lack of a worthy ideal.* Many people simply do not think or plan; either they do not know what they want, or else they want what they shouldn't. They do not have a clear, concrete idea of a worthy goal to be achieved progressively, nor do they have any clear understanding of the means by which they may attain that goal. If you were to stop people on the street and ask them why they get up in the morning and go to work, most of them simply would not know how to answer. Everyone else does it, so they do it.

If it is true that we become what we think about, then most of these people become nothing since they think about nothing. A powerful truck with a full tank of gas will get nowhere without a driver; the same is true of him who possesses excellent qualities but has no precise goal constantly in mind.

Why do so many marriages fail? Simply because the couples did not give a serious thought to the main goal in marriage: the raising of a family. They envisaged only pleasure and emotional love which cannot last or satisfy man's natural hunger for higher and more enduring happiness. When that erotic love fades, as it will in marriage, the couples feel frustrated. Then trouble sets in.

2) *Insufficient thinking about the goal.* Progressive realization of a goal implies also progressive, perduring thinking about it. Impetuous people, under the force of impulse, will think of nothing else but their

goal—but for how long? Impulse is a force from without, originating in the imagination, in the instincts, and in exaggerated emotions rather than in reason. Because impulse is so insubstantial, it cannot endure, and impulsive persons soon lose sight of their ideal. It is simply put aside. Others, guided for the most part by imagination, allow other worthy but petty goals to distract their attention from the main one. It as often happens, too, that such people are sidetracked from the principal goal by giving attention to lesser goals that are, in themselves, unworthy. If we use the almost unlimited power of our minds to focus on a reasonable objective, there is virtually nothing impossible to us. The average person, alas, uses only a small fraction of that power.

Consider this all too frequent case. A married businessman, with a loving wife and, say, four children, has for the past ten years found in his family life his dreamed-of happiness. At the same time, though his business is succeeding admirably, it begins to claim more and more of his time and attention. In short order his family life becomes less important to him and he spends considerably more time with business associates and friends outside the home. For her own part, his wife resents her loneliness; to compensate for this, she begins to spend more and more time in bridge and canasta sessions. Neglect of her home is, of course, inevitable, and less time and attention is given to children. Both husband and wife, in this instance, have permitted their common ideal to stray from their minds for too long a time; other less im-

portant goals have absorbed their thoughts and planning. Failure obviously threatens this marriage.

One of the greatest causes of failure in religious life is inconstancy in maintaining the supreme ideal vividly in mind. Faith alone discovers and keeps that supernatural ideal, but the senses point out very different and conflicting goals. Once the man or woman who has dedicated all life's strivings to the service of God begins to neglect that prayer and spiritual reading which enliven faith, the ideal of sanctity loses its attraction and forcefulness.

3) *Abandoning the ideal.* When difficulties arise, many, after only a brief struggle, give up their studies, their career, their enterprises, their activities. Diminution of comfort and pleasure is out of the question for them, and they refuse to face suffering, mortification or humiliation. They forget what Cardinal Newman once remarked that «nothing great is accomplished without suffering and humiliation, and many difficult things are possible with them.»

Years ago in China I knew a poor merchant who had invested many years of hard work, continual savings and great sacrifices into building a small shop. A few weeks after his shop had opened, it was leveled to the ground by a Japanese bomb. Instead of indulging in discouragement and futile lamentation, the old merchant built from the debris a one-room home and shop. With his last few dollars he purchased cartons of cigarettes wholesale and he was back in business retailing them by the pack. The old man had a precise and simple goal, and he refused to abandon it.

4) Adapting to adverse circumstances. The greatest obstacle—greater than cowardice of will—to efficiency and success is adaptation of the mind to failure. Many people think that their lives are shaped by external forces and circumstances; accordingly they accept adverse situations and try to adapt themselves to them. Practically speaking, these people are fatalists. The successful man seeks favorable circumstances and, if he does not find them, he makes them. Admit doubts and thoughts of fear into your mind without resistance, and failure is assured.

I knew a young salesman whose first effort with a prospective customer was met with summary rejection. Following his failure, he rushed toward his next prospect. But he allowed thoughts of doubt to occupy his mind and so, instead of knocking on the next door, the salesman simply turned around and went home. If the young man had erased all such doubts from his mind and placed himself in the dreamed-of successful situation, he would likely have succeeded. One failure induces a second failure; one negative thought begets another. If you think of failure, you will fail, because, as the dramatist warned, «our thoughts are traitors and make us fear to attempt.»

Too many Catholics, for example, living in an atmosphere which condones birth-prevention, succumb to this practice against their own consciences. Why? They have simply allowed such petty goals as saving money to buy a new car and being freer to travel, etc., to replace in their minds the noble ends of marriage.

5) Permitting negative thoughts and emotions to dar-

ken or cool your ideal. Fear of failure, dissatisfaction because of adverse circumstances, discouragement because the necessary means are not at hand—all these tend to extinguish the flame of enthusiasm, and the steps to success are slowed down. The fervent Christian who, in his search for perfection, continuously revolves in his mind the difficulties of self-sacrifice will easily become discouraged; he lacks that lively enthusiasm which comes from frequent dwelling on the warming love of God. Such negative preoccupation plagued St. Ignatius of Loyola during the first months following his conversion. «This life you are leading is too difficult,» he would think to himself, «and nearly intolerable. How can you endure it for the forty years you still have to live?» Fortunately, however, Captain Loyola had the wisdom to dismiss these disconcerting thoughts, and he turned his mind back to his Eternal King.

If a married person or member of an association doubts the fidelity of his mate or confreres and continually dwells on their defects rather than on their good qualities, then the bright ideal of a happy marriage or association will soon darken.

When you find yourself concentrating on pleasurable thoughts which militate against your ideal, you will probably have little or no success in removing them if they have been too vividly imagined. The explanation is simply that thought inclines to action, and a vivid representation of any pleasurable act awakens a strong tendency to its realization. So, in the time intervening between a difficult decision and its exe-

cution, don't even think! If you should surrender to a distracting thought, do not allow its pleasurable aspects to become too vivid! Better yet, try to substitute the consideration of its unattractive elements or the bad effects that might follow.

6) *Defective will.* Most causes of failure may be traced to a defective volitional act or to imperfect training of the will. Children raised under more difficult circumstances (little in the way of luxury; trying climate; work at home; long walk to school, etc.) are less prone to give up under hardships. These young people have acquired the habit of acting in spite of difficulties. Children, on the other hand, who are spared every effort, hardship or suffering and whose every wish and whim are respected do not acquire this habit of facing obstacles. When they encounter difficulties, they are likely to become impatient and angry, and to give up. The tremendous amount of marriage failures in modern couples is often due to that imperfect will. Young people accustomed to excessive liberty, pleasure, comfort and amusement become sad and frustrated when facing serious work, regular duties and, in married life, the difficulties of raising children. They forget the ideal formulated in the promises they made on their wedding day: to give themselves entirely to the other party. They forget that only «perfect love can make sacrifice a joy.» The will is defective when the goal proposed to it is not sufficiently clear or concrete, and this, in turn, is due either to the fact that we do not bring our imagination to our work, because we give insufficient con-

centration to the goal, because we have not calculated the means to achieve it, or because we have not determined fully to execute such steps.

Why do we fail to execute a general resolution to behave better? Precisely because the resolution is too vague and general, since it is a desire rather than a decision. We simply have not conceived concrete means to a concrete goal.

Our wills are also ineffective when we do not realize the possibility of achieving the goal, or if we have doubts about it. The best we can hope for in this condition is an ineffective desire («I would»), whereas we require a sincere and firm decision («I will»).

The decision will prove weak when the motives which attract resolution are not strong and compelling. The will is also inconstant when the motives are not of enduring value or are easily forgotten. This, probably, is the main cause of failure in seeking both temporal and eternal goals: the motives are not strong enough to counteract distracting and opposing goals. Perhaps the motivation is grounded too much on the imagination or emotional moods which do not endure. Or it may be that our motives, taken from others, have not become part of ourselves, have not been rooted in clear, convincing, personal reasoning. Even good motivation may lose its appeal with the passing of time and with inordinate attention to many small goals or occupations.

In our modern way of living, excessive indulgence in frivolous and inconsequential reading, television, radio, movies and social activities account, to a large

extent, for so small a percentage of successful people. This explains why religious institutes insist now, more than in earlier times, on the annual retreat, monthly recollection and daily meditation. These are means calculated to keep alive the supernatural ideal in the face of so many distracting factors.

Execution. Many people feel that everything is achieved after they have made their decision. Real decision, however, carries with it a tendency, an urge to act. A true decision is like a tension from which there is no relief until the goal is attained. If you do not have this kind of urge, you may well doubt the value of your resolution. Decision is the beginning of the road to success, but it is only the first step. If you do not keep thinking and willing and acting until you have achieved your goal, you will never be successful.

When the mind deliberates between two possible and opposite actions (for example, arising from bed when the bell rings or remaining in bed a while longer), and the will decides to follow the first alternative, the second alternative should then appear as actually impossible. However, when the alarm clock rings, you are destroying your decision if you permit any further deliberation about remaining in bed. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that you had not made a true decision in the first instance.

Summary

To summarize in a paragraph all these foregoing methods of avoiding failure and of achieving success, let us recommend the following:

1) In your thinking and your feeling, start picturing that worthy ideal, that happy achievement, as concretely and lively as possible.

2) Again, in your thoughts, warmed by your emotional feeling, identify yourself with that successful result. Live it as a thrill, seeing it as on a motion-picture screen for twenty minutes a day over a three-week period.

3) Do the same as above with the means necessary to achieve it.

4) Then, with your will, decide never to depart from this line of thinking and feeling.

5) Start putting into execution the means which you foresaw and those which you will find in the future.

V

Organic Life

INTRODUCTION

HAVING STUDIED THE PSYCHIC FACTORS of efficiency and fatigue in the three vital activities (intellectual, affective, and volitional), we must now explain the somatic, or bodily, factor; that is to say, how organic life can help us increase our efficiency in mental work by avoiding fatigue. For this purpose we shall stress the influence of the muscles, the blood, and the respiration.

«Mens Sana in Corpore Sano.»

This is to be our motto: a sound mind (*psyche*) in a healthy body (*soma*). A talented person, endowed with a strong will and rich affectivity, will accomplish little if he is affected by excessively tense muscles, impoverished blood and faulty breathing; but if these are healthy and well functioning, then—given all else—his achievements will be extraordinary.



V

CHAPTER 1

Muscles

Muscles. «He who cannot govern his muscles is incapable of perfect attention» (Maudsley). You may perhaps be surprised that so much importance is attached to the muscles in mental work; it is natural enough that they figure prominently in manual work. Nevertheless, without a certain amount of muscular tension, it is impossible to understand or to retain ideas. When solving arithmetical problems, for instance, our large skeletal muscles become tense.

Muscular tension	{	necessary for understanding and retaining; insufficient in idiocy and drowsiness; excessive in haste and emotion.
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The feeble-minded, the mentally retarded and the mongoloid type reflect in their faces insufficient muscular tension. A person who is catnapping, whose eyes close and whose head, arms and fingers droop (although he is trying to pay attention and remember), hardly understands or retains anything. If we suddenly ask him what we said, he will be able only to repeat the last word or, at most, the last phrase. His muscular tension was insufficient.

However, the opposite extreme of excessive tension is even more harmful. When this exists, peaceful concentration is impossible; in its place will be found nervousness, haste and excessive fatigue. Moreover, excessive muscular tension is usually accompanied by an underestimation of our weariness or, in other words, by a lack of realization of our progressive exhaustion.

This pernicious tension is manifested, above all, in the face, particularly in the eyes. But it embraces also the chest, the muscles at the nape of the neck, the shoulders, arms, legs, and fingers.

Active and passive eyes will be explained in greater detail because of the importance of the eyes in mental work, and because their misuse is the cause of most cerebral weariness, using up, as they do, 60 per cent to 80 per cent of the brain's energy.

Active vision	{ seeks the object; { blinks little; { is very nervous; { is tense, fixed; { feels weariness and pain.
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Active vision. This vision springs from the mental attitude of a person seeking an object or a word hurriedly, restlessly, nervously, as if fearful of not finding it or of wasting time in the search. As a result, muscular tension is excessive, the eyelids are kept wide open or are infrequently closed. There is a certain hardness or rigidity in the whole eye. Consequently, aesthetic pleasure will be lacking even in the presence of beauty, and there will be incomplete satiety at best, weariness, and even headache. With the passage of time, vision itself may deteriorate. One example of this is the eyes, wide open and staring, of Cardinal Mindzenty after questioning by the Communists. The newspaper photos made this startlingly clear.

Many headaches are the result of tense or «violent» vision. This occurs when we read rapidly and nervously or when we are exposed to any powerful glare of lights. The eyes are then uncomfortable and tense.

When the Russian Communists realized the exhausting effects of active vision, they began to use it as the first means of torture to subdue their victims and to wring from them the most improbable confessions. The victims are placed before a powerful light or a highly illuminated white wall and are forbidden to close their eyes. Soon the resulting tension and headache are intolerable. At the same time, tension is produced in the other muscles when the victims are compelled to stand for twenty, sometimes forty consecutive hours.

Cardinal Mindzenty was kept on his feet for 84

hours; in China Father Le Grand was forced to stand for 150 consecutive hours. During that time, by unrelenting questioning, the victims were prevented from resting their minds. Constant threats induced fear, their emotions became overexcited, and the result was a total or partial personality collapse which ranged between insanity and automatism.

Many cases of functionally defective vision are due to this prolonged tension, but this can be relieved, even cured, by training oneself to passive vision.

Passive vision	{ receives the object; normal blinking; is easy, flexible; is relaxed; is restful, pleasant.
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Passive vision. When we peacefully permit the object to come to us by itself, without nervously searching for it or making efforts to see, the eye is passive. It is without strain and half closed; it moves spontaneously; it blinks frequently and, by so doing, rests, lubricates and cleanses itself.

This vision does not fatigue the brain or damage the eyes. It is the indispensable requisite for useful observation, aesthetic pleasure and visual memory. It is the simple way of resting from mental work, the prerequisite for loosening the other muscles, thus preparing the way for tranquil and refreshing sleep.

How to Rest the Eyes and Reduce Tension

1. While reading, move the eyes and blink voluntarily once or twice a line (even 10 times a minute when watching movies), until you acquire the new habit and are able to do it unconsciously and normally.

2. Try to keep your eyes relaxed, half open, without straining to see anything.

3. Shift your vision from a large object to a small one, from something distant to something close by.

4. Try to move the eyeballs slowly upward, or imagine yourself releasing them and letting them sink into their orbits. Even picture your sight as being in the occiput. Little by little, through these auxiliary images, you will feel as if your eyes were going backwards. When you open them afterwards, you will find them refreshed and relaxed.

5. Gently close your eyelids. If, due to nervousness or to surrounding noises, they continue to flutter, try to relax by convincing yourself that there is nothing to see—nothing but an ever deepening darkness. Be calm and at ease. In this way auditory hyperesthesia (excessive excitement from noises), which causes much insomnia, can be overcome. When you are on the point of falling asleep and some sound excites or draws your attention, you will notice that the eyes move instinctively toward the noise. However, if at that instant, instead of noticing the sound, you make a conscious effort to relax the lids and eyeballs more and more, the noise will cease to disturb you.

6. Massage around the eyes or on the temples.

7. «Palming.» Seated comfortably, your eyes gently closed, surround them with darkness by covering them with the palms of your hands, but without exerting any pressure on the lids. Lean your elbows on your knees, bending from the waist. In this posture, gradually relax your eyes, diaphragm and other muscles. If you can notice light, even though your eyes are closed, there is tension. Concentrate on the darkness that gradually pervades everything, or recall pleasant memories, or «feel» the muscles going limp. Twenty minutes of this kind of rest, once or twice a day, benefits the eyes and the entire body, and, if you practice it before retiring, it will be a great aid in achieving restful slumber.

8. Give sun baths to your closed eyes. Do not open them to look at the sun, for this could even blind you. Rather, close your eyes gently, and without pressure; then face the sun when it is not too strong, for one or for several minutes; then move the head or the eyes gently so that the sun's rays may activate the entire eyeball. You will feel a strong reaction at first, even watering of the eyes, *but keep them relaxed!* Perhaps you will notice that tension decreasing and your photophobia (fear of light) diminishing so that you will no longer need dark glasses. Light is to the eyes as air is to the lungs.

9. A similar neuro-muscular activation is achieved by bathing your closed eyes with cold water, sprinkling them alternately some twenty times with handfuls of cold water.

10. If you experience nervousness, haste or weariness while reading, try to loosen your eyes more and more. Bring into focus one single letter or word in each line or paragraph until it stands out in relief or as if it were in bold print. This central focusing will soothe your nervousness and haste.

11. Take a rest at the end of each page or paragraph by making yourself completely conscious of some sensation, such as realizing peacefully and with precision a given color, shape, or sound.

12. Relax the other facial muscles. Since they are all interrelated, the tension of one muscle or group of muscles prevents or renders difficult the relaxation of the others. Therefore, first relax the forehead and between the eyebrows, smoothing out the wrinkles, then the cheeks and lips, trying to lift the latter slightly upward at the ends.

The other muscles. If, while reading or writing, your fingers or toes are contracted, your forehead creased or frowning, if you clench your jaws or tense your arms or legs, you are using more energy than needed. You will soon be tired. Such is the case of the child who, while doing a penmanship exercise, sticks out his tongue and nervously moves his feet.

Dr. Edmund Jacobson has succeeded in measuring this tension by applying very fine wires to the muscles and an electric machine. When the muscles are tense, they discharge a slight electric current, and this current increases in proportion to the tension. The current is transmitted to the machine where it is amplified and converted into a vibrating light. Such experiments

give visual evidence that mental processes tense certain muscles. For example, a person who «sees» scenes when he is pondering, tenses his eye muscles. He who seems to hear sounds or to mouth what he imagines uses the muscles employed in speech.

Similar results were obtained by this method when the subject was sleeping. The electric wires, again attached to the muscles of vision and speech, recorded the tension when the subject was dreaming. In the same way, when the subject was deep in sleep, the light on the recording machine went out.

The results of the above experiment were confirmed by making the subject dream. From the machine it could be determined that the person was sound asleep. Then a bottle of perfume was held open at the nostrils of the subject. Gradually the light on the machine begins to shine, and this indicated the presence and proportion of tension accompanying the sensation. The subject was then awakened. He said that he dreamed of entering a perfume shop, etc., etc.

The endurance some people exhibit in mental work probably depends, among other factors, on this, that they exert less tension and muscular strain.

The lapsus memoriae, or sudden failure to recall something familiar, may have its physiological origin in an unexpected tensing of the muscles of vision or of speech caused either by an extremely strong desire to recall a fact or by a fear of forgetting it. This tension, quite different from that required for visual and auditory images, seems to block the normal and required tensions, with the result that recall of the fact becomes

difficult. «Relaxation favors recall,» says Weitzenhoffer, and the conclusion is obvious: a good way to remember is to remove the excessive desire or fear which produces abnormal tension, and thus permit recollection to come naturally.

1. Close your eyes gently after lying down. For example, tense your right arm to the maximum, lifting and bending it and clenching your fist. For one or two minutes feel that tension in your fingers, hand, forearm, and arm.

2. Relax your arm a bit and, for another minute, notice this new tension.

3. Let the arm drop as if it dead, relaxing it as much as possible, keeping it free of all activity or movement. Then feel it grow heavier and heavier and completely independent of you as if you had no power over it.

4. Remain in this position for an hour if you are quiet and relaxed, but only for half an hour if you are nervous.

5. Another day, do the same to the left arm, then to each of your legs. You may imagine them as made of concrete falling heavily on the mattress.

However, all this should always be accomplished naturally, without forcing yourself to be quiet. Close your eyes as if your sockets were emptied of the eyeball. Your tongue should rest gently on your lower

¹I am indebted to Mrs. Karin Roon's practical lessons and to her book *New Ways to Relax* for some of the exercises and rules explained in this part of the book.

teeth, and your lower jaw should be loose. The neck should not bear the weight of the head.

Another method of relaxing arms and legs is to try to have them so flexible that they seem to have no connection with the trunk. Your hands and wrists should be your models, since their flexibility comes from constant use. Move your hands to prove this.

Swing your arms in a circular motion, first from the elbow, then from the shoulder. Later gyrate the legs from the knees and move your feet as you did your hands. You will, of course, find them stiff. When you approximate as much freedom of movement in your feet and toes as you have in your hands and fingers, you will have achieved perfect relaxation in them. Then rest awhile to preserve the relaxation acquired.

SUMMARY

Muscular hypertension	} makes tranquil concentration difficult; produces nervousness, haste and fatigue; hides nervous exhaustion.
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Two Ways of Looking at Objects

Active Eyes

Passive Eyes

strained, fixed.....	Eyes	relaxed, moving
anxiously searching.....	Object	peacefully received
scant	Blinking	frequent
agitated	Nerves	tranquil
defective vision	Effects	healthy vision,
weariness, pain		rest, pleasure

Remedies

Blink more frequently.

Keep the eyes relaxed, making no effort to see.

Loosen the eyeballs or move them upward.

Darken the eyeball with the palms of the hands and relax.

Bathe the eyes with sunlight and cold water.

Read, focusing on certain letters or words.

Rest, at times conscious of definite sensations.

How to relax other tensions	{	If caused by vertebrae deviations, physiotherapy.
		Feel maximum, medium, and minimum tension and go on relaxing.
		Feel your limbs as if dead, for 30-60 minutes.
		Flex arms, legs and wrists, swinging in circling motion.

V

CHAPTER 2

Blood

Blood . } Healthy
 } Well circulating
 } Sufficient in the brain

IT IS THE BLOOD WHICH CARRIES the nutrient substances destined to nourish the brain cells in their mental work; it is also the blood which, through the oxygen it carries, burns the residue and the waste matter produced by work and carries them off to be eliminated.

Fatigue will soon overtake us *a)* if the blood is not healthy and rich in nutrient substances; *b)* if, in its circulation, the blood encounters obstacles which prevent its entering the brain in sufficient quantity; *c)* if there is not enough blood, for then the brain cells will

not be properly nourished and will waste away without being repaired.

Healthy blood. You will not enjoy healthy and vigorous blood if you indulge in sexual or alcoholic excesses or if your digestion is disturbed by an excess of fatty or fried foods (especially in the tropics) or if your diet is not balanced. Let us develop this last point:

1) A diet deficient in Vitamin B will usually diminish the production of sugar. This increases fatigue and makes attention difficult. The remedy is to take, each day, a half cup of wheat germ and mix in a spoonful of yeast and some fruit juice. You will notice the difference very shortly. Determine to follow this routine regularly.

2) If your blood has a deficiency of hemoglobin and less than 5,000,000 red blood cells per cubic centimeter, the cells will not have enough oxygen to produce energy, and your fatigue will likely continue. Add iron and copper to your diet, plus calcium and Vitamin B₁₂, by taking black molasses which is very rich in these substances. Refined sugar, on the other hand, has lost these substances in the processing.

3) Irritability and nervous tension are increased with sugar deficiency. This occurs when there is too much time between meals. Some seminaries in Latin America, for example, provide a small snack at ten o'clock in the morning and again at four in the afternoon. The nervousness and mental fatigue of the students have been reduced, and many claim that this practice enables them to work with brighter minds

and, consequently, better results. If these snacks are to attain immediate results, then fruit or fruit juice should be offered because they release their sugar without digesting. If the energy provided by the snacks is to last several hours, then such food as bananas, whole-wheat bread, or whatever may contain starch should be offered. These foods are slowly digested and so produce energy, little by little.

Well-circulating blood. Muscular tensions in any part of the body, but most frequently in the neck, may cause some delay in the normal distribution of blood to the brain. This occurs most frequently among sedentary persons because of the forced and unnatural position in which they hold their heads for a prolonged period of time.

To avoid and correct this defect, they should make use of the following exercises:

1. A slow movement of the head to the right and to the left, or forward and backward, several times.

2. A moderate turning of the head in circular motion around the first vertebra.

3. A complete gyration or turning of the head in circular motion.

- a) The head is dropped until the chin touches the chest and the breath is exhaled completely.

- b) On commencing the intake of breath, a slow gyrating motion of the head to the right is begun, throwing the head backward as far as possible.

- c) The circle is completed toward the left while the breath is entirely exhaled; at the end, the head is raised on the new intake of breath.

d) The motion is repeated in the reverse direction.

After practicing these exercises for a few moments, relief will be felt in the head.

Deficient quantity of blood. If the blood must be concentrated elsewhere to activate other vital functions (for example, during a difficult period of digestion when the blood is accumulated in the stomach and intestines), then an insufficient amount will enter the brain. If after a heavy meal we try to do serious mental work, one of two things will happen: either the blood will flow to the brain and thus deprive the stomach of the abundance of blood it needs (a condition which would result in slow or faulty digestion), or else the stomach will keep the supply of blood it needs, but the brain, insufficiently supplied, will quickly tire.

A popular Spanish proverb sagely expresses this idea: «After a substantial meal, do not read even an envelope.»

Again, immediately following exhaustive muscular work or a strong emotional experience the brain may tire quickly, for the blood has been accumulating in other organs, and the whole body, including the brain, is weakened.

SUMMARY

The brain without abundant healthy blood	{ tires and becomes exhausted. does not eliminate its waste products. cannot feed or repair its cells.
Healthy blood is acquired	{ by freedom from sexual or alcoholic excesses or indigestion. by sufficient calcium and Vitamin B, through a balanced diet. by sufficient hemoglobin and oxygen through Vitamin B ₆ and black mo- lasses. by sugar deficiency caused by meals too widely spaced.
Circulating blood	{ is retarded by muscular tensions; is remedied by neck exercises.
Abundant blood in the brain	{ is lacking during difficult digestion; is lacking after exhausting muscular work or strong emotional experience.

V

CHAPTER 3

Respiration

WITHOUT FOOD OR NOURISHMENT mental work becomes difficult after a few hours; after a few days it is impossible; and, if these conditions are prolonged, life itself is threatened. Without respiration, which brings us the most necessary nourishments, we cannot last even a few minutes. If, instead of eating too much (the cause of so many illnesses), we were to breathe better, our health and efficiency would be much improved. We breathe about 15 times a minute, 900 times an hour, 21,600 times day.

Complete Breathing. Complete respiration should be abdominal, thoracic, or costal, and clavicular. The expansion should be forward and backward, initiated below the navel, and felt back in the lower part of the waist. Air fills the chest, which is gently expanded, and

gets close to the shoulders which should be kept lowered and pushed back.

Complete breathing proceeds rhythmically in three periods: intake, exhalation, rest. It is automatic and spontaneous, unless impeded by tensions or emotion.

Effects of good breathing. No other habit pays such high dividends or does it so quickly as good breathing. Specialists in respiration have accepted the conclusion that the span of our lives could reach 120 years if we would habitually practice this rhythmic and thorough breathing.

A case in point. A weak and sickly young man, sent to the hospital for probable tuberculosis, showed no lesions whatever in clinical examination. His breathing, however, was defective: his shoulders were tense, hitched nervously upward and forward. The advice given?

1. Acquire good posture by dropping your shoulders and pushing them back, trying to bring your shoulder blades together as closely as possible, automatically raising your chest and permitting the lower abdomen to assume its proper position.
2. Expand your nostrils (trying to feel, up between your eyes, the air you breathed in) and keep them expanded as you exhale.

When the doctor and this patient met thirty-four years later, the former was amazed to see a robust man of sixty. The doctor was delighted to learn that the medicine which saved, strengthened, and kept his former patient free from grave illness for all those years was the habit of perfect breathing he had ac-

quired, thanks to the exercises in posture recommended by the doctor.

By means of complete respiration, the blood, rich in oxygen, reaches the innermost tissues and all the cells of the brain. There the oxygen, combined with the nutrient substances, gives sufficient energy for cerebral activities and for the repair of the damages suffered by its cells. This explains why the brain feels so clear when we leave a closed room and breathe the pure air of the outdoors or when, by means of proper exercise, we have activated our breathing and circulation.

The effects of good breathing on concentration cannot be denied. Without such proper respiration there is that underlying nervousness and tension which soon become bodily and mental restlessness, accompanied by the urge to hurry and get a task finished. Both mental fatigue and headaches result from this nervousness; both can be cured if the person is taught to breathe with complete relaxation. The Orientals seem to identify perfect meditation or concentration with perfect respiration. Without good breathing there will be neither true joy nor serenity.

That euphoria, or feeling of well being, that agility of movement and joy which is felt on setting out on a morning walk or excursion may be explained (without excluding the psychic causes) by the greater abundance of oxygen received from pure air and through better breathing.

Incomplete respiration. In spite of the fact that respiration is such a necessary function, surprisingly

few people derive from it all the advantages they should. Sedentary persons, those who are feverishly active, the worried, and depressed—these people hardly ever breathe one-third or one-half of their capacity. In the case of defective breathing, bodily exercises are needed to remove the obstacle of tensions.

When the shoulder blades are too widely separated, the chest is depressed, and the capacity of the thorax is diminished. Consequently, less air will enter the lungs, and the blood will carry less oxygen to the cells. These cells, deprived in part of such necessary nourishment for the production of energy and the disposal of waste, will be weakened or work sluggishly. On the other hand, when both shoulder blades are drawn together, more air enters the lungs, diaphragm functions better, and abdominal breathing is increased. As a result of more oxygen content, the blood will be healthier.

Causes of Incomplete Breathing. 1. Shallow breathing is the result of emotions and haste which tend to shorten abdominal breathing, impeding the free action of the diaphragm, and tending also to contract and narrow the nasal passages. A telegram or telephone call brings a man the news of the sudden death of a loved one. The emotional shock inhibits free thinking, contracts the chest muscles, and disturbs his breathing. The initial muscular tension may be calmed, but the breath is still clamped, insufficient, and out of rhythm until his whole organism forces him to exhale with a deep sigh and thus find relief—the relief coming through the total relaxation of the muscles.

However, when he is left without oxygen for a moment after the sigh, he feels depressed and sad for that period. Then the lungs demand air and expand to let it in and fill the chest. This deep inhalation brings courage and the mind feels calm enough to think of what must be done.

For controlling anger we also recommend this method: breathe deeply two or three times before answering. Deep respiration puts us organically in a happy and bright state of mind, thus offsetting the hurt and turmoil which accompany anger. Shallow breathing is a physiological concomitant, support and completion of disturbing emotions. When this support is removed by proper breathing, the unworthy feeling of anger itself will be weakened.

2) The second cause of defective respiration is the persistent tension of the muscles of the chest and of the muscles around the shoulders and shoulder blades which prevent the normal expansion of the chest and of the lungs, forward, backward, and upward. At the same time, there is a lack of elasticity in the abdominal muscles, so that they do not have the tone to hold themselves in place. This causes the abdomen to protrude when the chest is depressed, and thus good abdominal breathing is impaired. A sedentary life which does not afford sufficient exercise for the waist, arms and legs and which requires unnatural and forced postures to be maintained for long periods (hours and even days) causes hypertension in some muscles and does not give sufficient tension or movement to others.

3) Respiration is also profoundly affected by too

great a tension in the nostrils and throat when these have been contracted by emotion or by faulty voice production. If the nostrils are only partially opened, the throat will also open only partially, and the lungs will not be sufficiently filled. Consequently, the muscles which control them will not expand or contract fully. This strain is usually accompanied by a tension of the jaws, which are tightly closed, and by sagging cheeks and lips.

If habitual tension has set in on your face, try to activate circulation by massaging with your finger the area from the nostril up to the eye, following your cheek bone, back to the nostril and close to the ear.

Breathing Rhythm. We give this name to the three phases of inhaling, exhaling and resting by which respiration is carried on, but more particularly to the third period, that of repose. Without this pause, we would become exhausted, just as the heart gives out if its period of rest is denied or disturbed. Indeed, any other muscle will also become exhausted if between one period of tension and another there is no pause or moment of relaxation.

To discover one's respiratory rhythm it is necessary to leave the organism so free from psychic and somatic tensions that it will spontaneously find the length of time needed for rest. For this purpose, lie down comfortably with the muscles completely relaxed. Inhale actively, but without effort, keeping nostrils distended; expel the air by a gentle sigh, but do not hurry to inhale again. Allow the lungs to expand and absorb air when they need it. The mo-

ments that elapse between the exhalation and the beginning of the new intake of breath give that precious post-respiratory pause, as the specialists call it. During this pause, if you concentrate on such as your hands, you will obtain a more complete muscular relaxation. If this period is prolonged without consciously seeking it, rather because you have removed all obstacles of haste and tension, then you will enjoy better health, muscular relaxation, rest, and emotional endurance.

During the war it was ascertained that those soldiers whose respiratory rhythm was more prolonged calmly endured scenes of horrors which psychically broke up others. This is the testimony of General Cooke in *All but Me and Thee*.

Remedies for Faulty Breathing. To combat habitual short breathing, conscious deep breaths would be advisable until the new habit is acquired. However, we shall not insist on any respiratory exercises, properly so called, because, as was indicated above, this automatic function is disturbed when we try to perform it consciously. Many persons have declined in health by performing breathing exercises without adequate guidance. So, if you perform any, be sure to do so under the supervision of an expert.

To improve your respiration, try to remove obstacles: 1) *psychic obstacles*: excessive and persistent emotion, agitation or haste; 2) *somatic obstacles*: tension or impediments, above all in the nose and throat. If the nostrils are kept wide open during inhalation and exhalation, the effect will soon be felt in

the rest of the organism and in a better production of the voice. Many singers, speakers and teachers who feel excessive weariness when they speak or sing will find tension the origin of their difficulty, and relaxation the beginning of its remedy.

To release the tension, loosen your tight jaws, gently allowing the lower one to fall. Relax them more and more; open the mouth as widely as possible. Keep it open and distend the throat until a yawn results. This remedy for tensions and fatigue will produce greater muscular relaxation and better circulation in the brain. The yawn irons out the creases of the face, stimulates the diaphragm, and is an aid to better breathing, singing and speaking. Complete respiration is found in yawning. We sense the expansion of the lungs from above and from below the pressure on the abdomen in front and in the back, below the waist and on the shoulders. As the air is exhaled, all groups of muscles involved in respiration are loosened.

Let us make, then, a slight effort to open our nasal passages wide, especially in their upper reaches, and to keep them open not only during the intake of breath, but also while exhaling. If the expression may be permitted, let us imitate a «rabbit nose.»

Breathing is of prime importance in all bodily exercise. If you breathe in as you begin the movement of, let us say, lifting an arm or mounting a step, the movement is spontaneously performed without the slightest effort. The same exercise performed without air requires much more effort.

At the beginning of the relaxing exercises you will

feel, perhaps, that the expanding movement of breathing begins above the stomach. The more you loosen your muscles and perfect your breathing, the lower will be that initial point. When perfect respiration is achieved, you will see that the abdomen expands also along the iliac and pelvic regions as well.

In every physical exercise this respiratory rhythm must be kept in mind, and between one movement and the next this brief pause should be allowed. However, since this pause is not the same for all, it follows that ideal gymnastic exercises are those which are designed and adjusted to each individual rather than those executed in groups.

SUMMARY

Complete Respiration

Complete respiration	{	abdominal, beginning at the navel;
is		costal, thoracic, back and forward;
		rhythmic: inhale; exhale; rest.
Effects	{	life—health—joy;
		concentration facilitated;
		emotional endurance;
		control of anger, fear.

Incomplete Respiration

Causes	{	Emotions	{	fear, anger;
			{	agitation, haste.
		Insufficient exercise	{	sedentary life;
			{	unnatural posture.
Causes	{	Facial tensions	{	narrowed nasal passages;
			{	tightened jaws;
			{	cramped tongue;
			{	sagging cheekbones and lips.
Causes	{	Tension in the trunk	{	tense chest muscles;
			{	sunken chest and protruding
			{	abdomen; tense diaphragm.
			{	
Remedy	{	Breathing exercises: none except under expert guidance.		
		Removal of obstacles	{	psychic: emotional control.
			{	somatic: tensions relaxed.
		Positive: discover your rhythm and follow it.		

VI

Habits and Fatigue

CHAPTER 1

Habits

NOW YOU KNOW HOW TO MAKE the most of your intellectual, affective, volitive and organic lives. At the same time you may find it complicated and almost impossible to recall so many practical rules: rules for elaborating and relating what you understand; rules for fixing ideas in your memory; rules for arousing interest and enthusiasm; rules for making effective acts of the will. Certainly it would be too much of a drain on your psychological resources if you had to start from nothing and arrive at a choice for every one of these psychic activities, and it would be still more difficult if you always had to be attentive to so many details in achieving perfect breathing and muscular relaxation. Fortunately all such difficulties are solved by habit formation.

A well performed action—for instance, praying without distraction—produces a greater facility and pleasure in its next execution. As a consequence, there remains an attraction or tendency to repeat it. A disposition is formed by our first attempt. Succeeding acts increase and stabilize this disposition and facilitate accuracy and joy.

Our organic, mental, affective and volitive make-up may be likened to a dense forest. Our thoughts and acts are men who make a path through the forest. After one man has made his way through, it is easier for the second man, and so on. So, then, in order to acquire the greatest efficiency in your faculties, begin to blaze the trail by means of initial acts executed as well as possible. Enlarge the trail and make it lasting by new and more perfect acts. Soon, almost without noticing, you will be able to concentrate effectively on your own enterprise, study or prayer, experience great interest and enthusiasm, be able to make decisions energetically, and execute them with promptness. You will be able to breathe and to relax perfectly. Habits, once initiated by the will, supply a smoothly running motor to propel us forward.

Organic habits involve opening up new nervous and muscular pathways, making these nervous transmissions and muscular movements more spontaneous. When, for example, our basic ability of breathing has acquired a thorough and rhythmic functioning through perfect, repeated breaths, we are assured of better health and efficiency for the future. We have then acquired the physiological habit of good respiration.

Character is the result of good habits the will obtained through well motivated decisions. Equanimity is derived from habitual control of emotions. Mental acumen and good memory are the fruit of sound habits of concentration and reflection.

Memory and habit are nearly the same. A memory used so frequently that no special effort is involved may be called a habit. When we act through habit, we think of the present, unaware that we are acting on account of past learning. When we remember, we consciously return to the past. So we may define a habit as an *acquired ability of acting with ease*. At one time you could neither read, nor write, nor swim, nor drive. Now you do all these easily because you learned through repeated exercise.

Utility of Habits

The value of habits to personal efficiency is incalculable, as we pointed out at the beginning of this chapter.

1. *Habit gives us the possibility* of executing thousands of everyday physiological and psychic acts without the necessity of planning, choosing, and carefully observing their execution. Habits, once initiated, supply the power.
2. *Habit gives facility*. It simplifies action and the need of attention. The natural difficulty of walking, jumping, of muscular skills in general is overcome by repeated purposive acts which create new bodily

patterns and so facilitate similar future actions. The careful attention needed for typing your first page or for the early stages of learning a foreign language is minimized when you have acquired the habit. Movements and sounds come about spontaneously and with scarce attention. The same is true for moral habits. A saint is a man like ourselves whose good habits have become second nature.

3. *Habit increases ability and assures a greater perfection.* After several purposive attempts, our thinking and writing, our speech and acts of will assume greater efficiency.

4. *Habit brings pleasure.* If you have acquired a habit of breathing well, of willing efficiently, of undisturbed concentration in your work, you will find joy in the performance of your acts, and this joy will, in turn, give renewed desire for the action. A good or bad habit becomes, accordingly, a dominant force either for good or evil.

How to Form Good Habits

We learn to sing by singing; that is, we first need the faculty in order to acquire the habit. We need the voice, and then we must exercise the voice. The habit of learning depends on both the intellect and the exercise of the intellect through concentrated and reflexive attention. Similarly, the habit of willing efficiently depends on the faculty of the will, then on repeated, deliberated, well-executed decisions.

There is no need of deliberation and conscious willing for habits acquired in childhood or induced through physiological needs or social or familiar milieu. However, to acquire properly psychic and educative habits, we need motivation. Furthermore, the greater and more lasting the motivation, the greater and more lasting will be the habit. From this it follows that sometimes a single act, very intensely and perfectly executed, can form a habit, as, for example, when someone learns a lesson with only one reading or when he acquires courage from a single heroic act. Ordinarily, however, this first act will produce merely the disposition to these virtues which will later be stabilized and become a habit by repetition. But it is not mere repetition alone which produces the habit. Every act overcomes inertia and obstacles, and so gives facility, rapidity and perfection.

How long does it take to form a habit? That depends, of course, on the skill to be learned—whether it be simple or complex—on the person's age, his bodily or mental ability, and on his diligence in performing the required acts.

1. Man seems to attain the maximum capacity to learn at twenty-five years of age. Then this ability, from what has been observed, remains fixed until a certain age, and then it begins to decline. This decline, however, should not be attributed to age itself so much as to the dispositions and attitudes which age may induce:—decreased enthusiasm; stabilization of opposite patterns; etc.

2. The ability, exactness and frequency with which

bodily or mental actions are executed have a great influence in quick stabilization of habit.

3. Greater perfection in attention and intensity of will are responsible for a deeper trail in our subconscious. In a forest, the steps of a child would not leave a great impression; the steps of an adult certainly would be more firmly impressed. Here, as in asceticism, we may say that one intense act is worth a thousand ordinary actions. A single sinful action, committed with real deliberation and enjoyed to the fullest, may leave such an inclination to that particular sin that the attainment of its opposite virtue will become very difficult. In the same way, mental study, if given full attention, may clear the way for new and agreeable concentration experiences. An energetic and complete decision may make us «feel» and appreciate the greater efficiency for further decisiveness. One great, intense act of love of neighbor for God's sake may well open the way to the virtue of charity. A recollected prayer may produce such a supernatural joy and such a tendency to repeat it that very soon the habit of prayer will be formed.

Four Ways to Quick Formation of Habits

For steady formation of moral habits, William James recommends that we:

1. *Launch ourselves (through acts and thoughts) with as strong and decisive an initiative as possible.* We are opening the trail. In other words, we must

want something intensely, and toward this end we must:

a) accumulate circumstances that will reinforce good motives;

b) put ourselves in an attitude or mood that will be encouraging;

c) seek any and every aid for our decision;

d) make the opposite course of action impossible by private or public pledge.

Captain Loyola launched himself with a very strong decision in favor of personal sanctification, despite family opposition. He accumulated thoughts and motives for his new ideal through long hours of reading and meditating on the example of Christ and of the saints. Religious vows draw their psychological force from these principles.

The effects of such beginnings will be:

a) greater momentum for our action;

b) the probability that the temptation will break down or be delayed;

c) the stabilization, in the meantime, of the habit and the removal of the opposite danger. To be once victorious is the best step toward a final victory.

2. Allow no exceptions to occur. No battle must be lost at the outset until the new habit is rooted. Continuity of training is essential; for habits, good and bad, are poised, as it were, on a scale. When the good habit goes up, the bad habit goes down. Opposing habits are forces struggling against each other. If you allow an advance for the bad habit (an alcoholic, for example, indulging in a single drink), you have un-

done the effects of many victories for abstinence. Try to attain success from the beginning, and this will increase your courage. Failure, on the contrary, inhibits new attempts.

3. Act immediately. Seize every opportunity to exercise your decision. The new disposition, put in your brain by the will, is not going to stay rooted there if your desire is only intellectual. That new disposition will be rooted only if your desire is emotional and energetic, and if you act on your resolution. Rational inclination of the will may be considered as the lever. The fulcrum is supplied by an enthusiastic decision strengthened by the emotional action on your muscles and hormones and by the motor effort of acts. With such a lever and fulcrum you may change your life and the world.

4. Keep alive the power of effort. The habit of willing efficiently has been imbedded in you in proportion to the momentum, repetition, motivation, and strength of your actions. Keep it alive by daily performing a little gratuitous exercise of energetic volition or of self-denial.

The old Greek philosopher, Pythagoras, used to say: Choose decisively a perfect way of acting; despise the difficulties of beginning; soon the habit will make virtue easy.

VI

CHAPTER 2

Fatigue

IN THE FOREGOING CHAPTERS, we have focused emphasis on efficiency in our work. Occasionally we have pointed out some causes or occasions of fatigue together with their obvious remedies. Our treatment of fatigue has been, till now, cursory and discursive. We should be wise, before going on, to seek some unity in our observations.

We must first distinguish the physical objective fatigue from the subjective and psychic, or from the feeling of fatigue.

Real physical fatigue is a diminution in capacity of working through accumulation of waste products in the blood and insufficient nourishment. This is well known in our *muscular system*. After a long, hurried walk or after repeatedly lifting too heavy burdens, our

legs and arms can no longer make the same efforts. Our strivings have burned up the food and oxygen in our muscles, and the blood has not had sufficient time to re-feed and to remove the waste products. Consequently, the production of heat and electricity in the muscles decreases, as does their elasticity. Lactic acid accumulates. The cause of this fatigue is not tension or the work itself; rather it is the excessive intensity of effort with insufficient relaxation; in other words, the disproportion between work and rest.

Not only voluntary muscles, but even the lungs and heart will suffer such a lessened efficiency or fatigue if they do not have sufficient rest between one contraction and another, that is to say, if their rhythm is disturbed. If proper rest is provided, the heart will keep its rhythmic pumping and will go on without fatigue for a lifetime. Too frequent or very strong disturbances of this rhythm may result in a heart condition.

A bicycle rider or a runner who discovers his own rhythm in contracting and relaxing his legs and feet would be able, theoretically, to run for days and weeks without any diminution of efficiency. However, he will still feel weariness, but it will come through some other causes such as lack of food or sleep, or tension in the skeletal muscles, etc., and mainly through boredom or anxiety. This explains fatigue among factory workers who constantly repeat the same series of movements, for muscular fatigue is not cumulative; the waste of one contraction is made up for by the subsequent relaxation; today's tiredness fades with tonight's rest.

Mental fatigue due to intellectual work is practically identical to the well known «feeling of fatigue,» to that psychic tiredness of which we become aware by introspection.

1) It is a general, rather disagreeable state with depressive feelings of boredom, sadness, exhaustion, and with painful sensations in different parts of the organism, accompanied by diminished or disturbed activity.

2) It may appear in the organism with physiological or biochemical changes (although infinitesimal), and then it may be called physical, objective. Or it may appear without known physical cause. Though the organs themselves remain healthy, their functioning becomes painful or is disturbed by emotion. We call this fatigue subjective, functional. On account of the practical difficulty in distinguishing these fatigues, we do not separate them in this manual.

3) After excessive work or study, something uncomfortable or painful appears in the consciousness, together with greater difficulty in working or studying. There is a shortening of our breathing and of the post-respiratory pause, an acceleration of from two to four additional breaths per minute. There is an increase in the influx of the blood to the head (noticeable by exaggerated pulsations), an increase in the central temperature of the body, whereas the extremities (the feet and hands) tend to cool down. In controlled experiments of one hour of difficult reading, the temperature increased 0.5° centigrade, and it took another hour to return to normal. In a mental arithmetic op-

eration lasting from one to five minutes, the subject's pulse increased from 5 to 20 additional beats per minute, small in comparison with the results of muscular work. When fatigue appears, we feel heat, heaviness and pressure in the brow of the head, and sometimes also pain. We notice a lessening of strength and vigor in our actions and in the quantity and quality of our achievements. Attention decreases, distractions and nervousness increase, sensations and perceptions slow down or become blurred, associations and phantasies become anarchic or more difficult, memory fails.

Central and peripheral fatigue. Experiences with the «erograph»¹ seem to confirm the existence not only of the peripheral fatigue we feel in the muscles, in the head, etc., but also of another fatigue in our brain centers. After repeated contractions in the erograph, the finger feels nearly exhausted. If at that moment we excite, electrically, the corresponding nerve of the exhausted finger, new contractions are possible. The reason is that there has been rest: certainly not a rest of the finger (peripheral) which has been doing the same work all the time, but a rest of the brain centers while the finger was moved by electricity. The conclusion may be: 1) The central nervous system tires more quickly than the neuro-muscular

¹ Erograph: an apparatus to register the work of, for example, a finger. The other fingers are immobilized while one is inserted in a ring at the end of a wire. This wire holds a weight of 5 to 8 lbs. The finger has to pull the wire every 2 or 3 seconds while a pen registers the movement.

peripheral system.² 2) If we give periodic and sufficient rest to the brain centers, we may obtain better results in our work, for we shall avoid or retard fatigue. Hence the rest periods, short interruptions of work every two hours, introduced in some factories. For ten or fifteen minutes workers change posture to drink coffee, and relax their attention and their muscles by chatting with friends. This has produced excellent results.

We may distinguish three degrees in this fatigue:

1) There appears, as an alarm call, «the feeling of tiredness,» that general disagreeable state of pressure or painful sensations in the head.

2) There is nervousness while working and, when the work is over, there remains a feeling of exhaustion more or less prolonged.

3) Finally, a more lasting exhaustion or neurasthenia may persist.

Causes Of Fatigue

Mental work itself, when properly performed, must be excluded as causing fatigue. Many doctors, Dubois, Brill, and others, would not attribute to mental work a single case of overwork treated by them. Dr. Woolworth's experiments on himself and on many others permit the same conclusion.

² This conclusion is reached from another avenue of research by Trevor Owen, M. B., F. R. C. P., in «Fatigue, Rest and Exercise,» *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Dec. 1962, p. 491.

Mental fatigue may sometimes have its root in a weak organism brought about by illness, insomnia, headaches, and general physical exhaustion. Still, there have been great artists, scientists and industrialists who suffered from poor health. However, the real cause is nearly always psychic. It may be a) abnormal attention or consciousness; b) lack of affectivity or an excess of emotion; c) impulsive will.

1) *Abnormal attention*. Through voluntary attention we must select or evoke thoughts or images that should occupy the center of consciousness in accordance with our mental purpose, and we must exclude those unwanted thoughts or images presented spontaneously by the senses, by the emotions or by previous association, or even imposed by exaggerated fears or desires. This requires some effort which may sometimes lead to strain and fatigue.

Abnormal consciousness. Together with our voluntary attention there is often a consciousness of something else which deprives our thinking of clarity, peace, and joy: a) *Consciousness of time*: «When is the feeling of fatigue going to appear?» b) *Consciousness of effort*, or of the functioning of the body or mind, accompanied by uneasiness; c) *Consciousness of problems* (personal, social, religious, etc.) or of incapacity for work, whether real or imaginary. In these cases an excess of S. T. H. (the somatotrophic hormone from the pituitary gland) will also produce a physical fatigue, according to the well known research of H. Salye.

2) *Excess or lack of affectivity*. This happens when

our joy, love, security and peace are insufficient, or because we ignore the utility of the job, or we forget our ideal, or we work without interest or enthusiasm.

There may be, on the other hand, an excess of S. T. H. because of frustration, indecision, discouragement, or because of that boredom which accompanies monotonous or prolonged work.

Aggressive emotions (anger or dissatisfaction at home or at work) and excessive fear of the employer or manager, of accidents, of financial failure, etc., may produce too much tension (mental and muscular) with an excess of A. C. T. H. (the adrenocorticotrophic hormone) and a greater difficulty in peaceful concentration.

3) *Impulsive will.* A perfectionist attitude introduces an impulsive urge to achieve more in shorter time and to a degree of excellence beyond our capabilities. This causes tension, uneasiness, and dissatisfaction; these, in turn, cause fatigue.

Any of these causes compel our brain centers to exert an effort they will not make spontaneously. They require from them abnormal speed or excitement and keep them without sufficient rest and food.

From the study of these causes and from the symptoms mentioned previously we may discover many of the means to avoid or alleviate fatigue and to re-educate neurotic persons.

Remedies

Preventive remedies: 1) During any organic illness, convalescence or general physical fatigue do not demand from your brain centers the same activity and efficiency as if they were healthy. They also have been weakened.

2) When studying or paying attention to any serious job, avoid haste, fear, tension. In fighting distractions, be positive; endeavor to become more interested rather than to fight distractions.

3) Increase interest in your work by understanding its utility or necessity to you, to others, to the glory of God. Work has been divinized by Christ.

4) Give variety to our work to avoid boredom.

The experience of textile workers carries a lesson: workers in silk factories are often very tired because the silk fiber seldom breaks, and so their work is of unbroken monotony. Tiredness comes from boredom. In cotton factories where the fiber breaks more frequently, workers' attention is sufficiently occupied. They seldom feel fatigue. On the other hand, in the wood industry where the fiber breaks too frequently, weariness, springing from fear or anger, is excessive among many workers.

5) Work with joy and pleasure. For this purpose,

a) Choose a job or profession in accordance with your capacity and personality. Hence the necessity of vocational guidance to know your qualities and inclinations and the occupation that will suit you.

b) Surround that job with as many external attractions as possible: good light, pleasant colors, wall painting, clean room and furniture, plants and flowers, soft music. I have noticed these attractions introduced in many offices and factories in the course of my travels. Invariably, I have learned from management, both short-term and long-range benefits have accrued.

c) Surround your occupations, in a very special way, with internal attractions. Give your work the warmth and brilliance of an ideal, either human or divine. Dislike of household jobs has produced fatigue and headaches in discontented housewives. In an experiment dealing with mental work a young man added 20,000 numbers in 100 minutes without experiencing any fatigue. However, the next day, when trying to accomplish the same job in the same amount of time without rest or interest, he accomplished only half the task and was fully exhausted.

In an office or factory the presence of an unpleasant, hated person or the crude manners of a manager finds reflection in an increased weariness of the employees. The opposite situation, of course, has beneficial results all around. And a mother who labors out of love for her children does not experience any abnormal fatigue.

d) Add divine incentive to your enterprise. A believer who discovers in his job the will of God or the opportunity to realize the divine ideal need have no fear of fatigue, because he will be filled with satisfaction and joy. When that great scholar and Doctor

of the Church, St. Peter Canisius, was entrusted with household jobs, such as sweeping the floors or cooking for the community, he felt such satisfaction in the conviction that he was doing the will of God that he could have continued in those occupations the rest of his life without the slightest sign of sadness or fatigue.

e) Do not bring your personal, social or family worries or fears to your work. Let timidity, discouragement, the feeling of inferiority or, for that matter, any depressive feeling remain outside.

Curative Psychic Remedies

1) Launch yourself totally into your work, removing any awareness of the functioning of body or mind, of any effort in your mental or manual work. The less you think about yourself or your faculties, the better will they function. This is a law of any acquired habit. Nip in the bud every anxiety about problems, insecurity, time or failure. (Read again our chapter on obsessed attention.)

2) Be calm and at ease. We mentioned, as the main cause of overactivity and stress, the impulsive and perfectionist attitude which imposes a goal above your capacity together with a restless and abnormal attention. So, without giving away a good ideal, be realistic, and accomodate any Utopian goal to your capacity, repressing the excessive urge to produce more, in a better way, and in less time. Reasonably accept limitations imposed by your ability, by time, etc.

3) Make your work as easy as possible to avoid discouragement. Shorter periods of attention may help.

Somatic Remedies

Relax all excessive tension in your face: frowning, clenching of the jaws, tension in your eyes. Be sure that your eyes are soft, passive, smiling, frequently blinking, that they are in a receiving rather than in a searching attitude. In any natural pause try a better breathing—breathing that is deep, prolonged and rhythmic. Activate also your circulation, especially in the neck, by circular movements of the head.

Since fatigue is induced or accompanied by poor focusing on letters or words as we read and by blurred or half-conscious sensations during the day, you may prevent or cure fatigue by trying to focus on words or letters in several paragraphs and by fostering conscious sensations during the day.

To receive conscious sensations means not only to stimulate your senses (through sounds, colors, smells, hardness or softness, and so forth) and to send nervous currents to your brain centers, but also to put more life into your sensations, receiving them consciously and filing them away in memory.

When distractions do not frustrate conscious sensations from without, and our secret thoughts do not tamper with them from within, conscious sensations are a tonic for a tired brain and nervous system. They bring peace, joy, tranquility and repose, for they allow

nature to work. Through them the objective world created by God enters within us with all its beauty. So, if you know how to receive them within yourself, you will obtain pleasure and rest from the blue of the sky, from the peace of a starry night, from the beauty and variety of flowers and the freshness of morning air, from the whisper of a fountain and the whistling of wind, from the greenness of fields, the trilling of birds, and the songs of innocent children.

How To Rest By Conscious Sensations

Apply your sense of sight for a few seconds to a landscape, an object, a detail. Keep a tranquil, almost passive attention. Take your time. Consider the object before you, and no other. Give no attention to any other thought or sensation. Let the object enter within you, as it is, without any special effort. Look at it in the way a young child does. Be sure that the muscles of forehead and eyes are loose and relaxed. When your nerves and muscles are tense, it is easy to have mental tension also, and this removes peace in the act of viewing. If your muscles relax, your mind also tends to rest.

Now apply your hearing to distant sounds. «Let the sound of music enter your ears» is Shakespeare's advice. But not only music; allow any sound to enter your consciousness peacefully, without advertence to the fact or its cause. Be a mere receiver of the sound; then perceive it with pleasure and relaxation; avoid any elaborating attention.

Apply the sense of touch by feeling any object, its coldness or heat, its hardness or softness. Feel your own footsteps, the chair on which you are resting, the door opening, feel your own breathing, the air entering and filling your chest. The first sensations perceived will be the most conscious sensations.

Exercise yourself in these sensations several times each morning and afternoon. Do them, for example, on five different occasions. Each time spend three to five minutes on them, and receive five or more sensations through each sense. Try to practice, as far as possible, the old maxim: *«Age quod agis»*; «Do what you're doing.» But you must do all this as if it were sport, not assignment; do it with joy, without anxiety, fear, or worry. In a few days you will notice greater rest, peace, and joy. The world will appear more beautiful. It will, as a matter of fact, impress you as it really is in itself. It will not be colored by your uncontrolled unconsciousness.

«Up to this time I've been looking at the world, but I've never seen it,» a woman of the business world told me after she had tried these simple remedies for a ten-day period. «It really is very beautiful, you know.» One of the most satisfying experiences in the life of the author is the large number of letters of appreciation received from men and women in all walks of life who followed similar advice in the second chapter of *Achieving Peace of Heart*.



VII

Practical Summary

FOR THE CONVENIENCE of those who have read the foregoing pages and wish to recall the more useful recommendations, we shall here make a brief, practical summary.

Concentration

Attend fully to what you are doing (hearing, reading, praying, etc.). This will result in better health and pleasurable efficiency.

Begin with courage, but don't force yourself. Concentration, like sleep, will come without your being aware of it.

Resist the curiosity to know what is taking place around you. Forbid yourself outside interests during the period you have allotted for your study, work, meditation. More than that, convince yourself of the necessity and usefulness of the work both to yourself

and to others until you feel interested and enthusiastic about it.

Judiciously chosen music as an accompaniment, helps some, not all.

For an hour, without interruption, make good use of the «warming up» period during which time the mind becomes absorbed in the theme.

After 30, 60, or more minutes, but before you feel fatigue, interrupt your concentration, for five or more minutes, during the «saturation» period.

During this interruption seek a complete change of ideas and posture, practicing some of the rules earlier indicated under «Rest.»

Perform physical exercises, especially those involving the neck or any other part which activates blood circulation and helps you breathe better. Relax a moment, with the eyes gently closed and «smiling.» These are excellent means of resting and aid in resuming your concentration.

Favorable conditions: 1) Good health, vision, hearing, teeth, nose, etc., in fine condition. 2) Good light: coming from the left, without glare to disturb you. 3) Study or work undertaken in the same place and at a set time. 4) A good motive made present to the mind; i. e., I want to study in order to understand, to be more useful, to fulfill my duty. 5) Before attempting a new lesson or task, recall and summarize the preceding. 6) A cursory glance at what is to be studied or performed and its relation to what has gone before. 7) Draw up your own examples to clarify

rules and laws. 8) Interrupt your study or reading at a natural pause, marking the place.

Overcoming Distractions

Do not accept distractions voluntarily.

Do not struggle directly against involuntary distractions by saying, for example, «I will not allow myself to be distracted.» It is better to overcome them indirectly by willing to return immediately to the work at hand.

Eliminate their causes: organic weakness, dissipation, lack of interest.

Read, making mental or written summaries.

Ask yourself questions about the subject and, as you read or listen, seek the answers.

Avoid the occasions of distraction: noise, people, a window facing the street, photographs, newspapers, or other objects on the study table.

If something is worrying you, try to find a solution as soon as possible, or calm yourself with the thought that you will think out the problem and solve it later. If the problem has no solution, accept as soon as possible the hardship required of you, discovering its usefulness for this life or the next.

Renew your interest, recalling the utility or need of the work you are undertaking. Make the free act of willing to be attentive for a specific length of time. If you feel it possible and you truly want it, you will succeed in what you have set out to do.

Retention

The greater our concentration as we study, the more deeply will the matter be engraved in our memory; much more so if it is associated or related to what is already known.

After every important paragraph, reflect upon it, try to repeat and to summarize it. Relate successive summaries to one another and, once your assignment is completed, observe the interdependence and unity among the sections, then make a general outline of the whole.

Use several senses: see the matter, hear it, speak about it, look for examples or comparisons that may serve your comprehension. If possible, explain the thesis or review it with another person.

Above all, use your predominant memory or sense organ: sight or hearing.

If it is a question of languages or of mechanical memory work, profit by the time immediately preceding and following sleep. Read aloud each part distinctly and without interruption and relate the parts.

Review the subject within an hour, a day, and a month.

Keep up interest by renewing your motives: utility, necessity, ideals.

Unfavorable circumstances. 1) Inequality in the times of study and rest. 2) Excesses with regard to amusements, alcohol and sex. 3) Intervening activities: the more similar they are to what you are learn-

ing «by heart,» the more they disturb your retention. Consequently, in the intervals during which you are not memorizing, study things of an entirely different nature. 4) Poor health and loss of sleep, excessive bodily fatigue. 5) Intense uncontrolled emotions: love, fear, anger—unless they are channeled into your studies. 6) Loss of enthusiasm, interest and pleasure, either because they were turned to other activities or because the present job or study is considered difficult, useless, and annoying.

Overcoming Nervousness, Tension, Haste

To overcome these, remove their causes: fear, worry, unbridled passion, ideal beyond your capacity.

Do each thing at its proper time, not intending during examination period to do the work of the entire course or, in one hour, the task of two.

Do not work with parasitic ideas; do not try to pay attention to several things at once.

If you are doing your duty, realize that you are gaining a millionfold in fulfilling the ideal of the Infinite. If what you do is useless, put it aside at once. By this means you will overcome nervous haste.

Predetermine the time you are going to devote to study; do not fix beforehand the amount of work to be covered, unless it is in proportion or inferior to the required time.

If the feeling of haste still persists, relax your muscles, beginning with those of the eyes. Read, fo-

cusing on a letter or word in a line or sentence. Try to acquire passive vision, blinking frequently and letting the words come of their own accord without straining to see them.

Interrupt your work by a few minutes of exercises.

If nervousness still persists, take twenty minutes for the «palming» exercise.

Do not study immediately after heavy meals or intense emotions. Wait until the nerves have been calmed by shifting your attention to other things for twenty minutes.

Study while walking; change your posture every ten or fifteen minutes.

Do not study after exhausting exercises; wait until the muscles are somewhat relaxed and the cells are repaired.

Avoid excess in coffee, alcohol, tobacco.

Study for short, frequently repeated periods or with other people.

Keep a well-balanced diet enriched with Vitamin B.

Avoid excessive or insufficient sleep.

How to Rest

Avoid fatigue by stirring interest and enthusiasm and by timely interruptions. No one, not even the most robust, should habitually spend more than two hours of serious concentration without a break of ten or fifteen minutes.

The norm for the majority should be hourly inter-

ruptions and for those who are weaker, the periods of unbroken work should be shortened.

During the break: a) Change completely your occupation or ideas, leaving the mind in repose by fully relaxing the eyes and the brow; allow your thoughts to wander freely among pleasant objects or have conscious sensations. b) Change of posture is recommended. Tense muscles should be relaxed and inactive muscles should be put in action by physical exercise, sports, manual labor. c) Activate your breathing and circulation. d) Rest your eyes by looking into the distance, or by closing them gently and softly moving the eyeballs upward, or imagining them loose and sinking in their sockets; also by covering them with the palm of the hands.

If you feel tired and your forehead or eyes seem hot and heavy: a) This feeling will be increased if you think and worry about it; it will disappear if you shift your attention from it. b) Correct whatever is faulty in your attention: haste, worry, distaste, fear or fatigue; shorten your period of study. c) Try a better central fixation or focusing while reading.

You can rest from active concentration by cultivating spontaneous conscious sensations or by the gentle affections of friendship, love of family, affective prayer, etc.

It is good to have a hobby, something to which you can turn in moments of fatigue, something which will attract and absorb your attention completely.

A complete five-minute rest: gymnastic march, the chest gently raised, shoulders thrown back and low-

ered, shoulder blades drawn more closely together. While marching 3 to 5 steps, breathe in actively; breathe out slowly during 5 to 10 steps, and rest the lungs during 2, 4, and 6 steps. This promotes circulation. The blood receives more oxygen, distributes it better, and gets rid of toxins; inactive muscles are exercised, the mind is distracted from study and is now renewed.

Practical Advice for Prayer

Do not start even vocal prayer without leaving your worldly surroundings; close your eyes and, by an act of faith, penetrate into heaven or into the depth of your soul where God likes to talk with you.

Do not enter a church without renewing consciously your faith that in the tabernacle is your great Benefactor and God whose heart is there throbbing out of love for you. Imagine Him overburdened with graces, longing that you take the burden from Him.

Then, starting with the Sign of the Cross, offer your prayer to the Blessed Trinity who is looking at you lovingly. This will reinforce the attention and reverence of your prayer.

While praying, do not give up the Infinite for nothingness, do not interrupt a private audience that is producing a treasure worth millions by turning, in voluntary distraction, to the pennies of this earth.

Try, on the contrary, to «abstract» yourself more and more from earth; delve deeply into the innermost

regions of your soul, for only in our innermost being does God talk to us.

If you have involuntary distractions, avoid their causes; in the meantime, accept your limitations, and persist with humility and trust in God's mercy.

Don't consume all of your time in the relatively cold intellectual operations of thinking and reasoning, but turn as soon as possible to the warmth of affections, petitions, and decisions. Try to express in words those feelings, pleas and resolves that come spontaneously, or those you would like to feel.

Make petitions; repeat the requests of your heart in ejaculations; try to feel their meaning. Most of all, try to adore and love God, for this will constitute your eternal happiness.

Always make some practical decisions to be executed that very day; i. e., correct a defect or practice some virtue, etc.

Ask at all times for the gift of prayer which is, of course, the precious fruit of prayer itself.

EPILOGUE

Superhuman Efficiency

THE POSSIBILITIES OF EFFICIENCY and joy in our intellectual life are really marvelous when a strong and enlightened will directs our thoughts, when noble and well balanced feelings and emotions stir our attention, and when all this is strongly supported by a sound organism. Yet in addition to the organic and rational life (human nature), we are offered still another sublime nature with superhuman capabilities. It is that divine life whose existence and properties become known by Revelation.

Divine Elevation

Christ said: «I came that they may have life [not only human life which they already possessed] and that they may have it more abundantly.»¹ «Unless

¹ John 10:10.

a man be born again of water [baptism] and the spirit [grace], he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.»² «Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man you shall not have life [a life worthwhile] in you.»³

Yes, through baptism we are born again to a divine life; we are «born of God.» It is like an injection or infusion of Christ's life which permeates our human nature and introduces us into the family of Heaven. «We have been called and we are in reality children of God.»⁴ We are given capabilities to act and enjoy not only as men, but also as associates of God.

Suppose you loved a little ant and were given the power of elevating it to human dignity with the capacity of understanding, loving, acting and enjoying as man. What a marvelous elevation! Yet, our own elevation through divine grace is so infinitely superior.

This is God's aim in creating men: that we may share His divine nature;⁵ that we may keep, activate and increase this divine life, while living in this world, that we may recover it through contrition and confession in the event of losing it through mortal sin, and, finally, that we may enjoy its full development in Heaven with a divine efficiency and happiness.

² John 2:5-6.

³ John 6:54.

⁴ John 1:12-13.

⁵ II Peter 1:4.

Efficiency And Growth Without Limits

The initial degree of grace—what is granted, for instance, in baptism—makes us «children of God»⁶ and heirs of Heaven. Were we to die immediately after baptism, we would glorify God and enjoy happiness not only as human beings, but also as partakers of God's divine happiness, since by grace we share in His nature. We would glorify God, shining like precious diamonds in His divine crown. Any action springing from this supernatural life has a greater value in God's eyes than the highest achievements of science, art, or power, for these are only human, natural achievements. An act of virtue, on the other hand, such as faith, charity, patience, humility, prayer, fulfillment of duty, etc., performed by a person elevated by grace, has a supernatural value, reaches a divine level, and pleases Infinite Wisdom more than all human achievements added together. A single baby with this supernatural life attracts God's attention more than the wisest and greatest men exhibiting only their natural abilities and progress.

Grace is a seed of God: «Whoever is born of God... His seed abideth in him.»⁷ The seed is the beginning of life and growth. As a child's natural life and ability after birth is developed by putting into action his senses and powers, so also divine life in the soul is increased through any act emerging from that di-

⁶ I John 3:1.

⁷ I John 3:9.

vine nature, v. g., supernatural acts of virtue, or natural acts (eating, resting, working) performed from a supernatural motive, such as to please God. He commands us to «grow in grace.»⁸

This growth of divine life in the soul means also an increase of God's love for us, an increase of our capacity of glorifying and enjoying Him.

As the degree of human perfection depends not so much on the quantity of actions as on their quality, so also our increase in divine grace is proportionate to the repetition and perfection of our supernatural acts. Some leading theologians believe that divine life increases not only by units, but may even be doubled if we activate our total supernatural potentiality, that is to say, if we act with full fervor, good will, and diligence.

If this be true, what a marvelous possibility lies before us! A person in grace, acting, praying or suffering habitually with full good will to please God, will in a short time increase that divine life a thousand, a million degrees. Consequently he will glorify God in heaven as would thousands or millions of children who died with only one degree of grace. Again, his happiness in every instant of eternity will be as the combined happiness of all those children, will be a million times greater than each child's joy.

By now we may understand the statement of many a mystic: «A saint glorifies God and obtains His favor more than a thousand average Christians.» The words of the angel to Mary, «full of grace,» also

⁸ II Peter 3:18.

acquire an extraordinary significance. For they mean *fullness* of divine life bestowed on her by God and fullness of growth from her diligent co-operation. From the same angelic greeting we also understand that God is most pleased with Mary's sanctity, so that He «is always with her» and she is «blessed among women.»

Confronted with such a possibility of superhuman efficiency, we acquire a new and sublime value for our lives. Living becomes worthwhile; every day or year that passes may yield full satisfaction; intense joy is possible even amid suffering.

NOTES

NOTES

(Continued from front flap)

teachers can overcome mental inertia and attain their goals by learning how to live each day with joy through a better understanding of God and the things of the spirit.

Since it is axiomatic that "we grow on what we feed," it is with pleasure that we announce Father Irala's latest helpful publication—**EFFICIENCY IN MENTAL WORK WITHOUT FATIGUE**. It cannot fail to open new vistas to all who have abandoned hope for self-fulfillment in today's high-pressure workaday world. In it are prescribed time-tested methods for sharpening the faculties for attention, concentration and retention—all without undergoing mental exhaustion. Rarely, in any set of "how to" formulas for self-improvement, are the things of the spirit brought into the picture. Yet, they play a vital role in the getting-ahead process. Regardless of the depths of one's religious faith, or lack of it, Father Irala, himself once a victim of nervous exhaustion, gives new meaning to the truth that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." The famous Russian novelist, Fedor Dostoyevski summed it up in four simple words: "Prayer is an education."

EFFICIENCY IN MENTAL WORK WITHOUT FATIGUE is not a book of theory. The immediacy of its appeal is captivating. You come to understand how one's behavior and habits may be properly channeled, how the body and mind function, and how they can grow in vigor and discipline. Wrote one veteran editor: "If I had read such a book as this thirty years ago, I would be a different person today." That's the object of this priceless work—to enrich your mind, to strengthen your will, and to make you a different person right now. Every reader will be impressed with the simple, understandable and scholarly language of every chapter.

FROM THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

The power of thought is unlimited. Within feasibility everything is possible to the will of man. . . .

* * *

We must not be satisfied with our present horizons. If our methods are good, they can be improved. If they have borne little fruit and great fatigue, there are simple and easily-applied remedies which will give us mental efficiency without fatigue.

* * *

It is hard to concentrate as long as unsolved problems bother us, especially if we give them exaggerated importance. Problems which have no solution are no longer problems . . . they are painful realities which lose their sting as soon as we accept them fully for what they are.

* * *

Those who are interested in achievement . . . may find themselves achieving what they had not dared hope for.

* * *

Many experience unusual fatigue after an ordinary day of mental work. . . . This may be the result of faulty functioning of our muscles, incorrect breathing, or in the condition of our blood. The author explains the contribution of the intellectual, the volitive, the affective, and the organic life, and shows how these four facets can be made to work harmoniously.